Stourbridge
CHRONICLE
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CLEAR WAY FOR METRO ROUTE

Report by Jamie Brassington

WORK has begun to clear overgrowth from a derelict railway line which will become a new route for the Midland Metro tram service.

The new route will be built between Wednesbury and Brierley Hill's Merry Hill shopping centre on the former South Staffordshire Railway line, which closed to passengers in the 1960s.

Workers subcontracted by Midland Metro Alliance (MMA) have been clearing the tracks of plants and trees so structural and environmental surveys can be carried out.

Community leaders say the development will create 'huge opportunities' for jobs and tourism in the Black Country.

Clearing way for tracks

The work will finally link the major Black Country shopping centre with the rest of the region via rail.

The route will run from the Waterfront at Brierley Hill, passing Dudley Castle and on to link up with the existing Wolverhampton to Birmingham line at Wednesbury Great Western Street.

MMA, who are working on behalf of the new West Midlands Combined Authority, expect work on the route to begin in 2019 and it will be open for passengers by 2023.

MMA will have to submit a business case to the Department for Communities and Local Government before the long-awaited Dudley link can finally become a reality

It is anticipated that funds will come from the Government and the West Midlands Combined Authority, which includes Birmingham and the Black Country local authorities.

Councillor Khurshid Ahmed, cabinet member for regeneration and enterprise for Dudley Council, said: "We've been working hard with partners to make this project happen as we are set to benefit significantly when the Metro rolls in.

"The improved transport links will create huge opportunities for jobs and tourism in the area. Therefore it's great to see the project moving in the right direction and a commitment from all involved."

Alejandro Moreno, MMA Director, said: "We are very excited to begin work on this key route but before we can begin construction, we do need to carry out some preparatory work in order to decide what further works are required to prepare for construction."

In the long term, the authority says the new route will also provide a direct link to the HS2 high speed rail hub and Birmingham Airport.

MAYOR'S TOWPATH WALK TO HELP FUND CHARITIES

Mayor of Dudley Councillor Mohammed Hanif took part in a seven-mile walk to raise money for his three chosen charities

THE Mayor of Dudley took part in a seven-mile walk in Stourbridge to raise money for the group of charities he is helping during his year in office.

Councillor Mohammed Hanif set off out from the Bonded Warehouse in Stourbridge on Sunday morning, leading a walk along the canal to the Prestwood area and back again.

Money raised by the sponsored walk will be divided between the three charities supported by the mayor – the Friends of Alfie Johnson, Dudley CIL (Centre for Inclusive Living) and the Dudley branch of Diabetes UK.

Councillor Hanif said: "After the Christmas festivities and over-indulgence lots of people start the new year with renewed enthusiasm to get fitter and slimmer."

He added that he hoped the sponsored walk will have helped to kick-start their fitness campaigns while raising money for three worthy charities.

Friends of Alfie Johnson is committed to helping children with disabilities in the Dudley, Sandwell and Wolverhampton. Over the years it has helped many children and their families by buying specialist equipment and funding services to enhance the quality of their lives. For more information see the friendsofalfiejohnson.org.uk website.

Dudley CIL is an organisation run by and for disabled people of all ages, providing information and support (www.dudleycil.org.uk).

Diabetes UK supports those living with diabetes, helps prevention of diabetes and backs research into the illness Diabetes UK's mission is that by bringing people together to work in partnership, they will support those living with diabetes (www.diabetes.org.uk).

DEATH

Inquest has opened on fatal car incident

AN inquest has opened on a 20-year-old woman who fell from a bonnet of a car being driven around a car park in Dudley.

Eleanor Underhill, from Shearwater Drive, Brierley Hill, died on January 3, eight days after sustaining head injuries in the incident on Boxing Day on the car park of the Tesco Extra, at Burnt Tree, at around 10.30pm.

A man and a woman aged 18, and a 19-year-old man, all from Stourbridge, have all been bailed until March 29.

Senior Coroner Zafar Siddique adjourned the inques.

ACCIDENT

Motorcyclist hurt in multi-vehicle crash

A MOTORCYCLIST was taken to hospital after he was in a collision involving a car and a lorry in Pensnett.

The crash happened on the High Street at around 9.40am on Monday.

The 24-year-old man suffered injuries to his knee and pelvis, and was taken to Russells Hall Hospital.

A spokesman for West Midlands Ambulance Service said: "We received a call at 9.40am to a collision on Pensnett High Street outside St Mark's Church of England Primary School.

ROAD

Barriers to keep out speeders and tippers

LOCKABLE bollards or barriers will be installed on a road following concerns about speeding and fly-tippers.

Bosses at Dudley Council approved the decision after residents raised concerns about Mears Coppice, which leads to 17 houses.

Councillor Hilary Bills, cabinet member for environmental services, said: "The road has become a fly-tipper's paradise and residents have become worried about people speeding. The bollards or barriers will be secured with a fire service lock to prevent access by four wheel vehicles."

The council received only one objection.

INSIDE

FIZZOGS TO BITE THE BIG APPLE

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Museum lands £129k grant for mine

Museum's Racecourse Colliery

A COLLIERY will be brought to life after the Black Country Living Museum landed a £129,000 grant.

The Racecourse Colliery was built at the Tipton Road attraction as a typical Black Country coalpit. It was named after the 1846 Dudley Racecourse which was originally on the site.

The grant from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and Wolfson Museums and Galleries Improvement will allow visitors to be able to see the colliery in action. The restoration work will begin next month and should be complete by February next year.

It will include a repair to the tub tramway so that coal can be transferred by pit pony, installation of atmospheric lighting, and the restoration of a pit cage which shows how miners were lowered into the shaft.

Costumed characters will tell the stories of those who worked in the mining industry.

The funding has been awarded to 39 museums across the country. The assessment panel said that they were particularly impressed by the museum's visitor numbers and agreed that the planned renovations would genuinely increase the amount of time visitors spend on site.

The museum's deputy chief Jonathan Wilson said: "The completion of this project will mean the museum is able to provide an immersive and thought-provoking experience for our visitors and give them a real sense of what day-to-day life was like for the people and animals working above a Black Country mine."

The news follows the museum's multi-million pound plans to create a 1940 to 1960s town with historic buildings from across the region.

Call for probe into poor rank of borough schools

DUDLEY schools are among the worst in the country for GCSE results, according to the latest figures

The borough is ranked 128th out of 152 local authority areas, based on GCSE results from A* to G across eight subjects. Sandwell was the only Black Country borough to be ranked lower.

This new 'Attainment 8 measure' is one of two new ways schools are judged. Dudley is 63rd on a list showing the rate of schools under-performing based on their 'Progress 8' score. This looks at pupils' progress throughout secondary school.

A total of 55.7 per cent of pupils in Dudley are achieving A* to C in both English and maths.

The figures show that, over all, one in ten schools are under-performing.

Councillor Nicolas Barlow, who represents the Wollaston and Stourbridge Town ward, said: "There is a cause for concern. We need to look at what the underlying factors are and put whatever support mechanisms we have to put them in place.

"The last thing we want is for those schools to become failing and to go into special measures.

Challenging

"More often than not staff have to work in very challenging circumstances and its always sad when results are not what you expect."

The top two performing schools in the borough measured against Attainment 8 are Old Swinford Hospital and Redhill School and Specialist Language College, both in Stourbridge.

They were followed by the Bishop Milner Catholic College and The Dormston School, in Dudley and The Kingswinford School & Science College.

Councillor Barlow continued: "This is fantastic news that these schools continue to maintain such high standards. It proves that hard work pays off and with the right support it makes a huge difference."

Schools had previously been rated on the number of pupils achieving five A* to C GCSEs, including English and maths.

Walsall was ranked 123rd, Wolverhampton 127th, and Sandwell came 147th.

Success is sweet for cake business

Winner Rachel Sanders, of Cake Bag, with Councillor Khurshid Ahmed and Steve Parker, from ICD

A BUSINESSWOMAN has got the future of her company in the bag after winning an ideas and innovation contest.

Dudley Council teamed up with successful local business owners and advisers to offer dragon's den-type events for organisations to pitch their ideas to experts.

Rachel Sanders, of Kingswinford, who runs Cake Bag, won the pitch to win £1,000 worth of in-depth business support for her subscription cake decorating firm. The 34-year-old said: "I have always been interested in cake decorating and it struck me that there was a gap in the market for people to receive a regular delivery of cake decorating tools and equipment.

"Cake decorators can either sign up to receive monthly Cake Bags, which often include tutorials, or projects to do, or they can select to receive a one-off delivery.

"It was great to get feedback from the team. I can't wait to start discussing future plans."

A total of 19 small companies also attended to explain their ideas for a new business, or to expand their existing one. Everyone who pitched received immediate advice on viability, strategy and tactic.

The businessman behind the initiative, Steve Parker, of Steve Parker ICD International Company Development, said: "We were really impressed by everyone that came along and hope that we helped them all with real, honest advice."

Lye balti event in extended Black Country festival plan

THE Black Country Festival will become bigger and better under agreed plans to invest £200,000 in to the event and spread it out across all four authority areas.

The three-year scheme will see a Lye-based Balti Festival, more Black Country Beer Festivals and themed night and day events.

The plan, which will see three people employed to focus on the event's expansion, will begin this year. It was approved at yesterday's Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership meeting.

The festival, which started in 2014, celebrates the region's best traditions and attractions during a variety of events held on and around Black Country Day on July 14.

All this has been achieved largely through volunteers, but by setting a three-year budget of £200,000, three paid staff could be employed to help expand the festival.

Co-organiser of the festival, Steve Edwards, said: "Over the last three years the festival has been expanding, but to have help through the LEP to make it even bigger will be absolutely fantastic.

"It started in Dudley, but every year we've added events in neighbouring boroughs, and we would like to add even more."

Businesses will be encouraged to sponsor the event in order to raise money, while the Black Country Consortium will also work with Dudley Arts Council to help identify sources of funding.

Top soap writer's thriller on stage

AN amateur dramatics group is hoping to thrill audiences with a murder mystery penned by a prolific Coronation Street writer.

Local Murder (The Maroon Cortina) was written by Peter Whalley, who has more than 600 episodes of the popular soap credited to him. It is being performed by Wordsley Amateur Dramatic Society. The society's publicity officer, and first-time director, Peter Goldsmith said: "The play is set in Lancashire and is a domestic thriller which centres upon 18-year-old Alan. He has been accused of murder and must prove his innocence."

It is staged at Kingswinford Methodist Church, on Stream Road, from February 1 to 4 at 7.30pm. Tickets are £7 (concessions £6) via (01384) 353662. Visit www.wordsleyamdram.com

Park-and-ride hit by resuracing work

COMMUTERS who use a Coseley train station park-and-ride service are being warned of disruption as part of resurfacing works this week.

The work at Gough Road park-and-ride was due to start on Monday and end tomorrow (Friday).

Pizza shop boss is fined over state of takeaway

A FORMER pizza takeaway owner, whose premises had mould on the walls and nowhere for staff to wash their hands, must pay out £3,000.

Nasar Hussain, 41, was in charge of Prego Pizza in Park Street, Lye, when inspectors found a host of problems. The ex-cabbie told the court he was in the process of selling the business when officials arrived.

Prosecutor Ms Saima Ahmed Aziz told Wolverhampton Magistrates Court: "The site was revisited in March after an inspection in February when a number of contraventions were found. Inspectors returned again in July and discovered a number of issues. There was mould to the walls in the rear stock room. There was chicken in there that was at room temperature. Paint was flaking off the walls and the ceiling."

Hussain failed to keep the premises clean and in a good state of repair, as well as failing to ensure toilets did not open directly into rooms where food was handled. There was also no hand wash basin in the kitchen and no adequate changing facilities for staff.

Hussain, of Park Street, Lye, pleaded guilty to seven charges of failing to comply with food safety and hygiene. Representing himself, he claimed he had carried out the steps ordered by the inspectors but by the time of the July inspection the business was run by somebody else, although it was still legally in his name.

Magistrates fined Hussain £1,600 with costs of £1,249.60. He was also told to pay a £160 victim surcharge.

Gambia crisis hits holiday of football boss

Gary Hackett had to cut his holiday short

THE boss of FA Cup heroes Stourbridge saw his holiday in the African sun cut short after being forced to flee Gambia due to political unrest.

Gary Hackett was taking a break with wife Kate in the popular West African tourism destination just six days after the Glassboys history-making appearance in the third round of the Cup, which had ended in narrow defeat against Wycombe Wanderers.

But the holiday came to a sudden end when tour operators Thomas Cook gave them 90 minutes to pack their bags and leave for the airport as tension mounted following the refusal of Gambian President Yahya Jammeh to relinquish power after losing an election.

The couple were made aware of the worsening political situation as troops from neighbouring Senegal prepared to enforce the replacement of Jammeh by newly sworn-in president Adama Barrow, a former London student and Argos security guard.

"There was a letter telling us to report to the tour operator at noon. That's when they told us we must be ready to leave by 1.30pm," said Mr Hackett, 54. "The whole hotel was evacuated. The staff were in tears because they were going to lose their jobs. The airport was in chaos. You could see military arriving from Senegal and Nigeria to try and sort out the situation."

Mr Hackett added: "As much as we were inconvenienced by having to come home early, it's nothing to what the people left behind will suffer, they rely so much on tourism."

Jammeh, who had ruled for 22 years, has since fled the country – and nearly £9 million has gone missing.

Council U-turn over school crossing patrols

CONTROVERSIAL plans to axe funding for school crossing patrols in Dudley have been ditched in a major U-turn by council chiefs.

Schools had been facing having to pay for school crossing patrols themselves. But overwhelming opposition, including a 20,000 strong-petition and demonstrations has now forced a rethink.

The council has confirmed it would continue to fund the service for 2017/18, a decision which campaigners have hailed as down to 'the power of the people'.

The authority had described it as 'a non-statutory service' and argued that by no longer funding the wardens it would save £395,000. The council claimed that the service was costing around £30 per pupil.

A consultation with the 60 schools which currently use service was undertaken in October and November.

The results were due to go to a scrutiny committee on January 30, but following the strong feedback from the public the council decided to change its proposal.

Campaigning warden Julie Paskin, who has been helping children cross the borough's roads for the past 12 years, is among those delighted by the U-turn.

Support

The 47-year-old from Woodsetton said: "I'm over the moon. It's been a big campaign. We've had protests and petitions at the school gates.

"We've had so much support and its been nice to see that we are valued. It's power to the people.

"We love our job, meeting all the children. It was shocking when they first announced it, especially as last year the council told us we were essential."

In total there are 63 wardens, and a further 14 on standby who can be stationed at any of the borough's 81 sites.

The council says consultation with schools and all political groups will continue, to see how the service can be made sustainable long term.

The revised proposal to fund wardens for another year will go to scrutiny later in the year.

Councillor Hilary Bills, cabinet member for environmental services, said: "We have listened to concerns and have found a way to fund the service for at least a further year as part of a healthy schools initiative."

From heartache to helping hand

Gurcaran Singh Bebi with Action Heart's Russell Tipson and charity co-ordinator Pauline Jenkins

A DEVOTED husband from Brierley Hill has raised £1,000 in memory of his wife.

Gurcharan Bedi raised £500 for Action Heart and £500 for The Leukaemia Unit Appeal at Russells Hall Hospital through a raffle that he organised.

The 74-year-old hopes that the money will help other families who are experiencing similar heartache after his wife, Surjit Bedi, died from cancer.

Mr Bedi sold raffle tickets to friends and residents in the Brierley Hill area, raising £1,000.

Over the past three years, he has raised a total of £3,800 for the two charities.

Mr Bedi said: "I raised the money in memory of my late wife who died from cancer in 2008. She was a kind woman who was known very well by the local community and is missed by all who knew her.

"It's really good to be able to help other people that are going through the same thing as we were. I'm very happy to be helping out and giving something back to the people that helped us whilst she was sick and in and out of hospital."

Joy Brown, fundraising executive at Action Heart, said: This is the third year Mr Bedi has supported us in this way and it is very much appreciated."

Going under to sing in the cavern

A CHOIR will be singing in the deepest heart of the Black Country this summer – underground in a cavern.

Following a similar popular concert a few years ago, Cradley Heath Male Voice Choir is returning to sing in the aptly-named Singing Cavern under Dudley's Castle Hill on July 8.

Audience members will be transported from The Portal, off Birmingham New Road, by Dudley Canal and Tunnel Trust boats for the hour-long concert in the unique location with its famous acoustics.

The boat departs at 7pm and will return at around 9pm Tickets are £11.50 and are available at dudleycanaltrust.org.uk/trip/cradley-heath-male-voice-choir/ or by calling 0121 557 6265.

Classic car show returns to NEC

BIRMINGHAM NEC will host the UK's fastest growing classic car event from March 31 to April 2.

More than 19,000 enthusiasts attended last year's Practical Classics Classic Car and Restoration Show.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Hippodrome 'fall back' withdrawn

A 'FALL back' planning application to 'potentially' demolish the town's Hippodrome has been withdrawn by Dudley Council.

The application was submitted in case terms agreed between the authority and the campaigners who took over ownership of the Castle Hill landmark were not met.

Planning and development boss Councillor Khurshid Ahmed said it was being withdrawn after Black Country Hippodrome Ltd voiced concerns it 'could have a detrimental effect on potential funding'.

Care home can build extension

A CARE home has had plans approved to build an extension which would create five extra bedrooms.

The extension would be made at Castle View Residential Home located on Priory Road, Dudley.

Dudley Council gave approval to the plans but said that the development should begin before December 22, 2019.

The extension would bring the amount of bedrooms at the property from 11 to 16 in total.

It will be built to two-storeys and en suites will be provided.

Choir join Sally Army for concert

CRADLEY Heath Salvation Army Band and Cradley Heath Male Voice Choir will be uniting for a concert, entitled A Feast of Music, on February 25 at 7pm at the Salvation Army, Meredith Street.

The choir's press officer, Eddie Nicholls said: "There will be music to suit most tastes, from pop to classics and there will be refreshments."

Tickets cost £5 and for more information phone David Cormell on (01384) 393067.

Festival of Glass to be held this summer

THE International Festival of Glass will return to Stourbridge this summer. It will take place from August 25 to 28 at the Ruskin Glass Centre and Red House Glass Cone in Wordsley.

A series of lectures, workshops, exhibitions, taster sessions and family activities will be available. Exhibitions, workshops and entertainment will be offered at several venues within the town's Glass Quarter.

Plans are being made and visit www.ifg.org.uk for further details.

New Star PR boss

A NEW director has been appointed to lead Star Public Relations, which has been launched by Midland News Association, the parent company of the Express & Star and The Chronicle. Sundeep Sehijpal joins Star Public Relations with 14 years of media experience.

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THE BEST OF PETER RHODES

ANYONE taking bets on President Trump not completing his first four-year term? I'm not talking about assassination or impeachment but Trump simply getting fed up. Today, he is the star of the world. Tomorrow he will discover how little power he actually has, how much money he is losing, how he and his family's every move and every careless word or Tweet is dogged by the press and social media.

A READER asks, if somebody takes a pot-shot at President Trump, will the bodyguards shout: "Donald, duck!"

THAT great social observer Will Self suggests waspishly that the Army should be scrapped and replaced by giving weapons and training to all 30 million British adults. An assault rifle in every home. What could possibly go wrong?

SOMEONE gave me directions this week including: "You go down that road where the old pub used to be." Can there be a single road in England that does not fit that description? We are a land of lost pubs.

TO my surprise, I have the support of at least one reader who believes human needs should be given priority over wildlife when it comes to turning Swansea Bay into a vast electricity-generation tidal lagoon. He says: "When the wading birds have waded away, within a few months the new environment will be recolonised with new species which like the new conditions."

YOU have probably spotted the tiny problem with the statue of Cilla Black unveiled in Liverpool. In a classic example of the Emperor's new clothes, local people applauded the unveiling without daring to point out that it doesn't look even vaguely like Cilla.

READERS may be reminded of the celebrated "black Diana," the statue of the princess in black granite and unveiled in 2000. It looks nothing like Princess Di but bears a passing resemblance to Denis Norden without his specs. It stands outside a funeral directors in Walsall. Unlike the Scousers, Walsall folk have never kidded themselves it's a good likeness. "Demonic," was one Facebook user's opinion.

ROLF Harris is on trial for sex crimes with the jury told on day one of his previous convictions. He is giving evidence via a video link from prison. If one trial can begin with total disclosure, why can't they all? Many are a legal game where everyone in court, except the jury, knows the defendant is a serial villain with a criminal record, but all conspire to pretend it's the first time they've seen him.

Don't miss Peter Rhodes every Monday to Friday in your Express & Star

Unemployment at lowest for ten years

UNEMPLOYMENT in Dudley followed the national trend with numbers claiming benefits for being out of work down last month.

Across the UK unemployment has plunged to its lowest total for more than a decade but the number in work has also fallen.

The jobless total was 1.6 million in the quarter to November, down by 52,000 on the previous three months to its lowest since early 2006. In the West Midlands unemployment fell by 7,000 to 161,000, partly due to seasonal recruitment at shops and delivery companies in the run-up to Christmas.

The number claiming Jobseeker's Allowance and other unemployment benefits was down by 35 in Dudley to 5,595.

Dudley's Councillor Hilary Bills said: "If people are finding jobs that is good news. If it means that they can go on to support themselves and their families then I am happy with that. It's a positive for the region."

Across the West Midlands the count was down by 1,310 to 80,480 with the biggest change in Wolverhampton, where the number of people claiming unemployment-related benefits fell to 6,430, down by 135 from November's figure. In Sandwell it was down 40 to 7.075. South Staffordshire saw a fall of 10 to 685 but in Wyre Forest, including Kidderminster, there was a rise of 10 to 740

The UK now has one of the lowest jobless rates in Europe, at 4.8 per cent, according to the latest data from the Office for National Statistics, but the number in work fell by 9,000 to 31.8 million.

Ted's sweet recipes kept tradition alive

By Marion Brennan

HIS boiled sweets had not changed in almost 200 years and, some would tease him, neither had his office.

Ted Gray, who has died aged 81, was famous for sticking to traditional methods of book-keeping and accountancy, as well as sweet-making.

When Edward Gray's of Dudley set up its own website seven years ago, it did not affect the way he worked as he continued to enter orders into enormous handwritten ledgers in his chaotic, paper-strewn office.

Tributes have poured in to the man who, with his sister Betty Guest, ran the business for nearly half a century following the death of their father, also Ted, in the 1960s.

Ted junior had worked at the North Street factory, started by his grandfather, John Gray, in 1826, since he was 15 and continued to drive to the office in his beloved Jag every day until 2012.

His daughter, Julie Healy, 53, said: "He was very proud of the business, especially the herbal tablets. Only certain family members know the recipe. He mixed the ingredients himself to keep it secret.

"He was a very generous man and loved his job. He still had an old-fashioned way of doing things. We only recently got a laptop."

Mr Gray started at the factory as a sugar boiler when he left school, returning after three years' National Service in the RAF, to become a delivery driver, eventually taking over the reins in his 30s with Betty, now 88, who still works at the firm.

Despite being a wealthy man, he remained true to his Black Country roots and loved nothing better in his spare time than playing snooker at the Royal British Legion Club in Hall Street, Dudley.ooker team and in his younger days also enjoyed playing darts.

The father of four died in his sleep after suffering for some years from hydrocephalus, fluid in the brain and had moved to a care home.

Ted Gray with his firm's famous herbal tablets and he was one of very few who knew the secret recipe

No modern technology – Mr Gray with the office ledger

Ted Gray with sister and business partner Betty in the 1990s

Pedestrian died from head injuries in collision

A CHURCH helper and security guard from Birmingham, who died after being hit by a car in Amblecote, will be 'a massive loss to the community', say his friends.

Hassan 'Victor' Darvishvand, 35, who was originally from Iran, was struck by a Toyota Auris in High Street, near the junction with Vicarage Road, at 2.35pm on October 9.

Mr Darvishvand was a popular member of the Jesus Fellowship Church in Newtown, Birmingham.

A statement from Pc Robin Smalley, from the West Midlands Police collision investigation unit, at Black Country Coroners Court, said:"Braking tests and measurements taken from the skid marks showed that the car was travelling at under 30mph. The driver told police that she didn't see Mr Darvishvand come from her offside. "

A witness said that Mr Darvishvand was wearing sunglasses and earphones, which may have impaired his vision and hearing.

His friend Carol Benton said: "He was lovely, very helpful. He was always there to offer support to people."

"I had just seen him buying some watches to send back home which I assume were Christmas presents for his family. There was a few of us there from the church with him when the machine was turned off."

Coroner Zafar Siddique recorded a conclusion of death by traffic collision.He said he would write to police and Highways England to find out if safety measures are required on the

Meeting to discuss £1.5m park move

A POTENTIAL £1.5 million cash injection to improve a park will be discussed during a public meeting next week.

The Friends of Stevens Park hope the community asset will be in line for a Heritage Lottery Fund and Big Lottery Fund grant. Dudley Council is working with the group on the bid. The friends group will meet at the White House on Park Road on Tuesday, at 7pm. All members of the local community are welcome.

The second stage is set to be submitted in February next year, once a feasibility study has been developed. If successful, the money could be used for a number of improvements around the park. The community organisation Muddle Together CIC is also working with the council on the bid.

Take part in Resolution Run for stroke charity

THE Stroke Association is inviting people to sign up for a Resolution Run at Hagley Hall, near Stourbridge. There will be choices of five, 10 and 15 kilometre runs on March 5, at 11am. It costs £15 to enter the runs via stroke.org.uk/resolution

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Deaf theatre group has been given charity status

A THEATRE for the deaf and hard of hearing is celebrating after successfully applying to become a registered charity.

Dudley Deaf Theatre grew out of a project to bring performing arts to hearing impaired communities. It is run by members of Dudley Deaf Social Club and Black Country Touring.

After a series of successful shows and workshops, the group decided to set up Dudley Deaf Theatre as a charity in its own right and contacted Dudley Council for Voluntary Service for support.

Now, just a few months later, Dudley Deaf Theatre has been registered as a charity by the Charity Commission.

Trustee Jeff Clarkson said: "We're over the moon to achieve charity status. We're looking forward to the opportunities that being a charity will bring and to staging some brilliant shows that people from the deaf and hard of hearing communities can participate in and enjoy. We're so grateful for the support that Dudley CVS has given to help us achieve our goals."

The group now plans to hold further performing arts workshops for the deaf and hard of hearing communities and to provide accessible shows in the new year.

Dudley CVS is a charity which supports people and organisations in Dudley borough to make a positive difference in the community. It also helps individuals or groups to set up, run and develop voluntary organisations, charities and enterprises.

£125k blueprint to revamp towpaths

A PROJECT encouraging walking and cycling in Dudley is to get a £125,000 boost.

Dudley Council will be improving canal towpaths from Seven Dwellings Bridge to Black Delph Bridge, in Brierley Hill, which links to the National Cycle Network.

It follows work last year costing £460,000 to make similar improvements to towpaths between Kinver Street Basin, in Wordsley, Buckpool Nature Reserve and The Dell Stadium in Pensnett.

Councillor Hilary Bills, cabinet member for environmental services, said: "We are delighted to be involved in these additional improvements to local canal towpaths, which will help people to walk and cycle more often."

Canal trust hold Portal art display

DUDLEY Canal and Tunnel Trust is planning its first open art exhibition at The Portal, off Birmingham New Road. The closing date for entries is June 30. To find out more call 0121 557 6265.

Former garage boss jailed for sex attack

Sex attacker Robert Parke

A FORMER garage owner has been jailed after admitting to sexually assaulting a client and then intimidating her into dropping the charges against him.

Robert Parke, aged 52, committed the assault on the woman after she bought a car from RP Autos in Brierley Hill, a firm he used to own, in May.

He then continued to harass the woman, even after she reported the assault to police, and forced her to sign a false statement in a bid to get the charges against him dropped.

Parke then tried to evade justice by moving addresses around the country. His luck ran out after officers placed him on the force's Most Wanted website.

After information was given to police, Parke eventually handed himself in. Parke, of Bromley, Pensnett, pleaded guilty at Wolverhampton Crown Court to sexual assault and perverting the course of justice.

Detective Constable Mike Clarke, from West Midlands Police sexual offence team, said: "This man abused his position to prey on a woman who had bought a car from his garage. He then intimidated her and harassed her into dropping the charges.

"Now he has been put behind bars and will be placed on the sex offender register for life. I would like to take the opportunity to commend this woman's bravery in coming forward initially and then throughout the investigation. I hope today's sentence will bring her some comfort as she continues to recover from her ordeal.

Parke was sentenced to four years and four months imprisonment. The sentence included three unconnected counts of sexual activity to which he also pleaded guilty. He was also placed on the sex offenders register for life.

Coroner refuses to question conviction

A CORONER has refused to question the conviction of a Brierley Hill man over the death of his girlfriend in Crete - despite hearing expert evidence her injuries could have been caused by a fall.

Jonathan Leach said he could not dispute a Greek trial's findings that Luke Walker was responsible for the death of Chelsea Hyndman.

Miss Hyndman, who was 20, died on the Greek island in May 2010 after suffering severe abdominal injuries.

Walker was alleged to have beaten her and was initially charged with Miss Hyndman's murder. He had always denied assaulting her and claimed her injuries were the result of a fall.

Walker was kept on the island and sentenced to eight years in prison when the murder charge was downgraded to grievous bodily harm leading to Miss Hyndman's death.

However, the sentence was successfully appealed, meaning Walker would serve no further jail time.

At Miss Hyndman's inquest last week, Walker's barrister, Mr Andrew Scott, requested the coroner consider questioning the Greek's court's proceedings when delivering his own verdict into her death.

But Mr Leach refused to do so. However, he decided against a verdict of unlawful killing.

Conclusion

Mr Leach said: "The proceedings were in Greece, a country within the EU, with a democracy and civilisation which goes well beyond our own, therefore the trial can not be criticised.

"I can't make a determination inconsistent with what was found in Greece, where Walker was found guilty.

"It means the only conclusion available to me is unlawful killing and a narrative verdict.

"As a result of blunt force trauma to the abdomen, my conclusion is that of a narrative conclusion."

The inquest had earlier heard from Professor Colin Johnson, a consultant surgeon and specialist on the pancreas, who said if Miss Hyndman had her hand trapped in her belt when she fell, as was suggested by witnesses, it could have been enough to cause the injuries.

But he said it was 'not possible to say one way or the other' if the injuries were caused by an assault or the fall.

The coroner's comments came after Walker, now 29, admitted he wished he had taken his girlfriend, who was from Castleford in West Yorkshire, to hospital sooner.

Chelsea Hyndman died from severe abdominal injuries

Luke Walker labelled the trial in Greece a 'farce'

Speaking at Wakefield Coroner's Court last week, Walker said: "I would have taken her to hospital sooner. I should have made her go. I should have stood my ground and taken her."

The court heard Miss Hyndman had been feeling unwell in the days before being taken to hospital but Walker said she had refused to go.

Miss Hyndman was admitted to hospital on May 16 with severe stomach pains and jaundice. She had suffered damage to her pancreas which caused multiple organ failure and died the next day.

Walker was arrested over her death and Greek prosecutors claimed he had caused her injuries. He said that she fell on a cobbled street during a night out.

Walker lived with Miss Hyndman in the holiday resort of Malia. The pair had met while working in the resort of Malia in 2008 before they began a relationship a year later. Walker was charged with her murder after witnesses described hearing them arguing after a night out in Malia in the early hours of May 12, 2010.

The court in Greece was told neighbours heard shouting and furniture being moved in the couple's room.

After appealing the eight-year jail term, Walker eventually received a three-year suspended sentence.

He later labelled his trial in Greece as a 'farce'. Following his conviction, his family raised more than £8,500 to pay for his bail, ensuring he could return to the Black Country. He had been kept in custody for five months charged with murder.

Walker's solicitor Bill Bache said it was likely there would be further proceedings at the High Court and that they wanted an 'independent examination of the facts'. It was also possible they would seek a new inquest.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Charity run at shopping centre

THE first charity fun run to be held at the intu Merry Hill shopping centre is to take place on Sunday

The run will start from outside the centre's Argos entrance. It is being led by Pure Gym and will start with fun warm-ups and pre-race exercises. People of all ages and abilities are welcome.

Sign-in desks will be located by the Argos entrance on the morning where people can make a donation and receive wristbands. Money raised will go to intu Merry Hill's charity partner Promise Dreams.

Beer festival's boost for charities

DUDLEY Winter Ales Fair saw £1,400 raised for charity. Organisers from Dudley and South Staffordshire branch of the Campaign for Real Ale sent cheques for £700 each to the Mayor of Dudley's charities appeal and Blind Veterans UK.

Total attendance at the festival was 2,136 over the weekend of November 24 to 26 in Dudley Town Hall, down from 2,390 in 2015. The 31st festival was initially called off but was rescued when Jacqui Edwards came forward to organise the event. The branch signed up 39 new members at the festival.

Zumbathon helps kidney patients

A KEEP fit 'Zumbathon' that took place at Dudley Leisure Centre last month raised £1,200 for the Kidney Patients Association.

Following the event, organised with Russells Hall Hospital staff, the leisure centre team have presented a cheque to nurses at the Dudley hospital's renal unit. The money raised will go towards the upkeep of special holiday homes, which allow patients and their families to have a break with access to essential treatment.

Annie Get Your Gun to be staged at Mill

THE show that brought us the classic show tune There's No Business Like Show Business is being produced in Sedgley.

The Phoenix Theatre Company will be staging Irving Berlin's Annie Get Your Gun at The Mill Theatre, at Dormston School, from February 28 to March 4. Tickets are £10 with evening performances at 7.30pm and Saturday matinee at 2.30pm. Email info@phoenixtheatreco.co.uk or call 01902 897520.

Metal detecting talk

THERE will be a talk on metal detecting at the next meeting of Stourbridge Historical Society.

Jim Wall will deliver an illustrated lecture, the Past Beneath Your Feet, to members in the Wollaston Room at Stourbridge Town Hall on February 16 at 7.30pm. It costs £3 for visitors.

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IN MY VIEW
with Mark Andrews

Sweet man who put his town on the map

YOU would need a heart of stone not to laugh at Amber Rudd's speech to the Conservative Party conference in Birmingham last year being recorded by West Midlands Police as a 'hate incident'.

Apparently, a professor of physics called Joshua Silver – sounds more like he should be in Pirates of the Caribbean to me – took offence at something the Home Secretary said and called the police. He hadn't actually heard the speech, but we don't what little details like that to get in the way of a bit of pompous virtue signalling, do we?

Anyway, the good news is that the crime rate is obviously so low in the West Midlands that the Old Bill found time to investigate. They concluded that no crime had been committed, which you might think might would be the end of the matter, but in the strange world of "hate" legislation it is never that simple. If you're found guilty it's a crime, but if you're innocent it is recorded as a "hate incident".

This sort of thing would normally make me livid. But this is the Home Secretary, the figurehead for the establishment which created all this nonsense. Poetic justice is the phrase which springs to mind.

■■■

BY the way, the definition of "hate crimes" on a poster in my local library includes "anything that is offensive to your family." I take it mother-in-law jokes are out, then?

■■■

MANY people in the Black Country will be saddened to hear of the death of Dudley confectioner Ted Gray, aged 81.

Ted, who worked full time until the age of 76, was one of the old school, a type of businessman you rarely find today. A small, quietly spoken man with a proper Black Country accent, he never had any big ambitions or grandiose expansion plans, he just liked sweets and wanted to carry on his family tradition. His tiny, beautifully chaotic office was stacked high with precarious piles of paper, the walls festooned with sepia pictures chronicling the company's history. He lived within walking distance of the factory.

As a journalist, I remember feeling a sense of frustration at this modest, unassuming man's reluctance to deliver any boastful soundbites that would make my job easier. Teddy Gray's shops were selling the classic sweets in jars long before it became fashionable, and even today there is something unmistakably welcoming about them that the new pretenders can't quite emulate.

It is often hard to explain to outsiders what makes the Black Country special, but this unassuming little man had it in spades.

World famous in Dudley, that's what he was. A proper Black Country mon who wouldn't have had it any other way.

Baroness Heyhoe Flint collects her OBE in 2008

With her friend and former Wolves and England boss Graham Taylor

Heyhoe Flint in the World Cup winning year of 73

City ambassador and a sporting trailblazer

As tributes are paid following the death of Baroness Heyhoe Flint, **HEATHER LARGE** looks back on her life and legacy

SHE was known for being a proud Wulfrunian with a heart of gold and a trailblazer for women's sport.

But to her beloved football club, Baroness Heyhoe Flint will always be "Our Rachael – warm, witty, hugely competent and irreplaceable."

As Wolves mourn the loss of their vice-president tributes have flooded in from the world of sport for one of England's finest female cricketers. And there was an outpouring of grief from across Wolverhampton – the city she loved and called home.

Her son Ben says Wolverhampton and Wolves meant everything to the 77-year-old.

"She, the club and the city were intrinsically linked," he said.

Gruelling

Baroness Heyhoe Flint was still a familiar and much-loved face at Molineux up until her recent illness. She was a proud supporter of the club in continuing to take a keen interest in Wolves' charity and community work despite her own gruelling schedule.

"She went to every game when she was a director, home and away, rain or sleet, bottom of the table or top of the table. For 30 years it was the mainstay of her life," added Ben.

Wolves club secretary Richard Skirrow said: "We have lost a really special lady. I've known her well for over 20 years. You felt you knew her well from the first meeting as she was such a warm and engaging person. Rachael was a bundle of energy; tireless, always on the move and always, it seemed, happy.

"Her many achievements will be well documented and for her charity fundraising alone she should perhaps have been more highly decorated but, at Wolves, she'll just always be "our Rachael" – warm, witty, hugely competent and irreplaceable."

At the Molineux home of her beloved Wolves, where she served as vice president

Born on June 11 1939 to PE teachers Roma Crocker and Geoffrey Heyhoe, the former Wolverhampton Girls High School pupil excelled at sport from an early age and later taught PE.

She went on to play a pivotal role in developing women's cricket, captaining England during a career which spanned two decades, and leading her country to victory in the 1973 World Cup.

During her first House of Lords speech in 2011, she said: "My challenges in sport began with garden cricket aged seven with my brother and his friends.

"I wasn't allowed to bat for three years because girls don't play cricket. When I did eventually get to bat, the boys couldn't get me out for three days, so in the middle of June they decided it was the football season."

It was while playing cricket that she became friends with Sir Jack Hayward when he sponsored the women's team in 1970. Years later she still credited him with playing a major role in providing her with the platform to make a name for herself.

Baroness Heyhoe Flint became the first woman to be admitted to the MCC when her playing career ended and in 2004 she became the first woman elected to the full committee. She later became the first woman to be inducted into the International Cricket Council's Hall of Fame.

Ben added: "Women's cricket was an unknown sport then, and under-funded, which is where her wonderful friendship with Sir Jack Hayward started. There was a lot of bigotry in sport then and she faced real barriers. But she was a trailblazer.

"She applied to the MCC under the radar as R.Flint. As the MCC started to process her application they thought she was a bloke.

"They suddenly realised there was a woman applying. The MCC held a referendum on female members and after a second referendum it got through.

"I was there the day the vote was passed at Lords, it was just amazing. She has been a great role model."

Later Baroness Heyhoe Flint became a successful journalist – working for the Express & Star and as sports editor on the Wolverhampton Chronicle – and an award-winning after dinner speaker.

After Sir Jack took over Wolves in 1990, Baroness Heyhoe Flint became heavily involved in the club's public relations department, From 1997 to 2003 she served as a director at Sir Jack's request, later being made a vice-president.

She was President of the Lady Taverners from 2001 to 2011 and a Deputy Lieutenant of the West Midlands. In 2008 she received her OBE from the Prince of Wales and two years later was inducted into the ICC Cricket Hall of Fame.

Honoured

In 2011 she was honoured by her home city by being granted the Freedom of Wolverhampton. She was also inducted into Wolverhampton's Sporting Hall of Fame.

Ben said: "A lot of people had wonderful things to say about her over the years but to me she was just mum. She was a great person, a legend in terms of the simple things like her sportsmanship and the love of her family.

"She was just a giving person, always thinking about other people, not herself. It was almost impossible for me to keep track of everything she was doing."

Huge crowds are expected at Baroness Heyhoe Flint's funeral on February 8. A funeral cortege will leave Molineux at 2pm and make its way to St Peter's Church. Some fans will be able to attend church, but via a ballot. Numbers will be limited due to the amount of people expected to pay their respects.

To apply for a place, email fans@wolves.co.uk with Rachael Heyhoe Flint in the subject line, and include a name, address and supporter number. It will be family flowers only at the funeral.

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Mend this flaw in the law quickly

IN 2015, after more than 50,000 people joined the NSPCC's 'Flaw in the Law' campaign, the Government introduced legislation to arm police with new powers to tackle paedophiles.

It means an adult is breaking the law if they send a sexual communication to an under 16-year-old.

But now – almost two years later – the Government is dragging its feet and the law is yet to be triggered, despite the fact that similar legislation is already proving successful elsewhere in the UK

In the last six years Scotland has recorded 1,537 offences under similar legislation and the law has also successfully been in place in Northern Ireland since last February.

This new offence was supposed to mean that the law could be brought to bear on anyone who grooms children online, yet in too many cases the police have been left powerless to take action.

All this makes the Government's delay even more baffling and unacceptable.

ALLY SULTANA
NSPCC Midlands Campaigns Manager

Filling holes is lucrative

IT has been announced that it is costing £14,000,000 to repair potholes in UK roads. Who is gaining by this expenditure?

The 'gangs' who actually do the repairs seem to just turn up, a brief spell of tidying up, then fill in the holes, level the material off, impact it then paint a sealant round the edges. In most cases they do a good job.

Initially the companies carrying out this work have to spend money on equipment but after this expense, it is just materials and labour. Very often such companies just disappear after a short while, pocketing our cash. Does no one in authority bother to check?

PETER COLE
Kingswinford

Don't be seduced by this special relationship

SO Mike Wood thinks we should back Trump over trade deals!

Why would anyone want to deal with such a hateful, racist, sexist bigot?

Has he, like so many people, been seduced by the so-called 'Special Relationship' that exists between Britain and the USA? If so, think again Mr Wood.

You only have to take note of his inaugural speech: 'America first, America first'. Any special relationship has only ever existed to further US interests.

In addition, Trump is a climate change denier, in fact, he was elected largely on a promise of disregarding all the scientific evidence to the phenomenon.

He brings to mind an earlier madman who was elected in the 1930s on the premise of bringing back jobs and making his country great again – and then left the world in ruins!

ALAN ASHMAN
Sedgley

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POST
Dudley Chronicle,
Chronicle Editorial,
51-53 Queen Street
Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES

EMAIL
dudley.chrons@expressandstar.co.uk

Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

We want to see our GP when we're ill, not three weeks later

IT is obvious to us as patients that the appointment system at doctors' surgeries is just not coping with the number of patients that need to see a doctor.

But why is the waiting room almost always empty when I go to the surgery even though there are often a number of doctors in attendance?

Is it because many patients often don't turn up for appointments?

Could it be because it has been so long since they booked it they have forgotten it, forgotten or couldn't be bothered to cancel it, got better in the meantime or worse still they have ended up in hospital?

Some of the patients who got better probably didn't need to see a doctor in the first place but it stopped genuine sick people from being able to get an appointment.

I think the appointment system is great for people who need to be organised for work, school, etc, but there are many who could and would be willing to just sit and wait.

I would if I could see a doctor on the actual day that I feel ill, and not three weeks later.

I know you can ring before 8am for emergency appointment but what exactly constitutes an emergency?

Please, please bring the old system back, if only in part.

It surely would not be so difficult to arrange a duty doctor on a rota basis, a doctor who does not take appointments on that particular day and just sees those walk-in patients.

A closing-off time for patients to go on the list and an understanding that you may have to wait some time would be readily accepted by many.

It would free up appointments for those that want or need them.

Us old ones remember the days when you had no appointments and we had no choice but to wait.

Surely running the two systems side by side would please everyone?

JENNY JAMES
Wordsley

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Motorist who knocked down police officer is sent to prison

A DRIVER who knocked down an officer while fleeing from police has been sentenced to 17 months in prison.

The 26-year-old motorist, Mohammed Asun, of Queens Cross, Dudley, had neither insurance nor licence when he was spotted at the wheel of a silver VW Golf in a car park by officers on foot patrol.

The two uniformed officers – both wearing high visibility jackets – thought he was acting suspiciously at Southall Lane, Dudley, at about 3.30pm on August 16 and went to investigate. Asim tried to drive away but his path was blocked by a vehicle coming into the car park.

Mr John Evans, prosecuting, told Wolverhampton Crown Court: "The defendant reversed at speed, crashing into a skip. One of the officers smashed the driver's side window with a baton in an effort to stop the vehicle as it accelerated towards the exit." The Golf struck Pc Alan Hands before speeding through a red light. The officer was knocked off his feet, suffering leg injuries and was off work for three weeks.

Mohammed Asim – driver

Naila Yasmeen – lied about car

Asim's former girlfriend, Naila Yasmeen, 34, also ended up behind bars for a year after trying to cover up the crime.

Fingerprints

The car was registered to Yasmeen, who was out when police visited her home, but she reported the Golf as stolen soon after. She and her Asim both named someone else as the driver. But father-of-three Asim's fingerprints were on the vehicle.

He waited until the day of trial before pleading guilty to dangerous driving, assault and having neither insurance nor a driving licence. Yasmeen admitted letting him and another person borrow the car and pleaded guilty to attempting to pervert the course of justice.

Mr Carl Templar-Vasey, defending Asim, said: "He acted on impulse without concern for others but did not deliberately drive at the officers." Miss Alisha Harris, for Yasmeen, of Highfield Road, Saltley, said her client had ended her relationship with Asim. Recorder Jason MacAdam jailed the pair, who each had previous convictions, and said: "It was only by chance that Pc Hands was not more seriously injured."

New museum plans revealed at Archives

Annette Templar and Jane Lamine show off the plans for the displays

PLANS for the future of Dudley museum and art collections were unveiled at drop-in information sessions.

The old museum and gallery on St James's Road was closed by the cash-strapped borough council in December after more than 100 years as the town's landmark museum and art gallery, despite a 4,000 signature petition calling for it to be retained. Four staff lost their jobs.

A series of open days were held last week at the borough's modern Archives building, on Tipton Road, where the museum's exhibits are to be stored and displayed.

The event gave people the chance to look at floor plans and layout for the borough's collections.

Councillor Khurshid Ahmed, Dudley's cabinet member for planning and economic development, said: "The collections enjoyed many happy years at the old building but these proposals are about building something sustainable for the future. We are planning to celebrate this borough's unique and fascinating history."

The collections are currently being packed away and will be moved to the new site over the next few months, while the new museum will open in the autumn. Items on loan from the Duncan Edwards collection, which Manchester United have been negotiating to buy from the family, could also go on show at the Archives.

Council chiefs said the new museum will be 'at the heart of the town's 'tourism hub' beside the Black Country Living Museum and Dudley Zoo and Castle.

The former building is now intended for staff training and conferences.

Drug abuse led to gamer's death at 41

A DRUG user died after his substance abuse led to congestion in his airways.

Jaspal Gill, 41, was discovered by his parents at the family home in Bristol Road, Netherton on October 10.

Mr Gill had been asleep after a late night of playing computer games, but when his father checked on him the next afternoon he was unresponsive.

Cannabis, cocaine, anti-depressants and alcohol were found in his body. The drugs or alcohol found in his system weren't at a dangerous level but previous substance abuse had caused his airways to close up.

A pathologist's report said: "The patient was found deceased at home. He had not been ill recently. He used to drink heavily but not recently. He was playing computer games until about 3 or 4am. He normally got up at 2pm or 3pm but he hadn't got up on this occasion. He was unresponsive. An ambulance was called but he was pronounced dead."

His blood was sent for toxicology tests. The results revealed the drugs and alcohol that was found in his system were not at a potential fatal dosage. But his airways and lungs were congested as a result of previous drug abuse.

Zafar Siddique, senior coroner for the Black Country, recorded a conclusion of a drug-related death.

Can you ride tandem? If so, Beacon need you

TANDEM cycling volunteers are being sought by a Dudley-based sight-loss charity.

The Beacon Centre launched the tandem club last year to help people living with sight loss experience cycling. But the club, which meets every other Tuesday, is short of experienced and confident cyclists to be the front riders.

To find out more email tjukes@beaconvision.org or call 01902 880 111.

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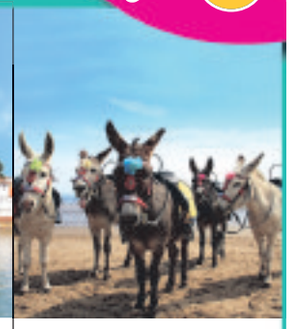

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Trump that – Fizzogs are on the way to USA

Dancing grannies go to the Big Apple – comedy act the Fizzogs will jet across the Atlantic to strut their stuff in New York city

START spreading the news – the Dancing Grannies have decided to have a rest from the Edinburgh Fringe this year and pop over to the Big Apple instead.

The Grannies, also known as Black Country comedy act the Fizzogs, will jet across the pond in the summer to strut their stuff on the streets of New York city.

The move follows numerous requests from American fans who are among more than 300 million people who have viewed the Grannies' dance routines on social media. Now the Fizzogs are looking for sponsorship to help fund the trip.

Member Deb Nicholls said: "The plan is to take America by storm. We aim to flashmob in New York this summer as the Americans keep asking when we are coming over.

"It'll cost an arm and a leg to get there so we are looking for sponsorship. If there are any potential sponsors out there and you feel The Dancing Grannies need support, then get in touch with us and we'll have a natter."

The Fizzogs have already been booked to perform their routines at the Bahrain Formula One Grand Prix in April. That opportunity arose after the performers caught the eye of a talent scout from the Middle East at the Edinburgh Fringe last summer.

Closer to home their new show, Suck It And See, is currently touring with performances at the Rose Theatre, Kidderminster, on February 4; Theatre on the Steps, Bridgnorth, on February 9, 10 and 11; Core Theatre, Solihull, on March 4; Oakengates Theatre, Telford, on March 10; Atrix Theatre, Bromsgrove, on March 11; and the Swan Theatre, Worcester, on March 24. Email info@thefizzogs.com or for tickets visit www.thefizzogs.com

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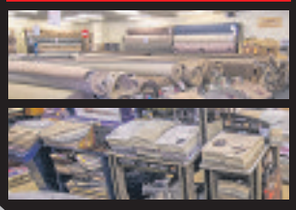

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Thug stabbed dog after it urinated on marijuana

A THUG has been locked up after stabbing his dog repeatedly in the face and then trying to hide the animal from police by hiding her behind a washing machine.

Michael Bailey, of Dale Terrace, Tividale, launched a savage attack on his dog Lucky after she urinated on a bag of marijuana at his home.

The 54-year-old punched and stabbed the animal numerous times in the face. Police were called after the attack was overheard but when they arrived Bailey said that the dog had run off. However, after a search of the house officers discovered the frightened dog had been boarded up behind a washing machine.

Bailey was jailed for 12 weeks for causing unnecessary suffering to the dog. Bailey was sentenced at Birmingham Magistrates' Court after being found guilty in his absence at the same court in November. As well as the prison sentence, Bailey was disqualified from keeping animals for life and was ordered to pay a £115 victim surcharge over the incident on June 18.

RSPCA inspector Steven Morrall, who investigated, said: "This was a particularly brutal attack on the poor dog. On top of this, she was also very thin as a result of neglect.

Lucky was identified by a police dog legislation officer as a banned breed under Section 1 of the Dangerous Dogs Act, and as a result the animal was put down.

Inspector Morrall added: "Lucky had made a full recovery and we were hoping to see her into a new home. The RSPCA do not make these decisions. We do not agree with Breed Specific Legislation and have been campaigning for changes."

Lucky the dog was put down as a banned breed after being mistreated by owner Michael Bailey, of Tividale

MP speaks out in Commons over cuts

DUDLEY North MP Ian Austin has attacked the Government over what he called 'unfair' cuts to the funding of the borough council.

The Labour MP spoke out in Parliament where he said reduction in funding from central government to Dudley Council was having a damaging effect.

The authority has made a series of cuts to services and must save £25 million by 2020. Dudley finance bosses have blamed the drop in funding from Whitehall.

Mr Austin said: "Dudley would be able to do much more on housing if it wasn't having its budgets cut by 20 per cent, compared to one per cent in Surrey and two per cent in Buckinghamshire.

"That's put pressure on a whole range of council services. We've seen libraries close, social services under pressure and, over Christmas, hard-working, low-paid staff in Dudley had to take three days' unpaid leave, effectively a pay cut of one per cent, because of this Government's cuts.

"How can they sit there and tell me that the cuts they have imposed on Dudley are in any way fair?"

Curator had indecent images of children

THE senior curator at the Black Country Living Museum has quit his post after being arrested for possessing and distributing indecent images of children, a court heard.

Dr John Beckerson, aged 42, earned around £40,000 a year as curator at the museum on Tipton Road but called his employer to tell them he would be resigning after his arrest on March 1, 2016.

Police had forced entry to his home on Beechfield Grove, Bilston, in the early hours of the morning. They took two mobile phones and a Dell computer tower.

Subsequent searches found that across his devices he had 20 category A images of children, as well as 47 category B images, and that he had distributed 843 online.

Beckerson pleaded guilty to all three charges at Wolverhampton Crown Court and was given a six-month prison sentence suspended for two years.

Dr John Beckerson

Lonely

Prosecuting Miss Fiona Cortese, said: "The defendant said to officers he was a classic lonely man who looked at pictures online but had never touched anybody.

"He also told police that he had used chat rooms to distribute images.

"When he mentioned his job at the museum he told police that this did not put him in regular contact with children and he also added that he had no sexual interest in children."

Mr Robert Cowley, defending, told the court Beckerson had gone over and above what others arrested for similar offences would normally do to help police.

He said: "I don't for one minute argue that these offences are not suitable for a custodial sentence.

"However, the defendant has asked for and complied with the help offered to him in order to put this in the past, he has been frank and honest from the police from the outset.

"He was earning roughly £40,000 a year and is now working for between £700 and £900 a month, so the financial effect is huge for him."

Judge Simon Ward also ordered that Beckerson comply with a sexual harm prevention order, be placed on the sex offenders register for seven years and comply with a sexual offenders rehabilitation programme.

Judge Ward said: "These images show real children in real situations and by looking at them you create a demand."

Ultra fit take on DirtRun

A 32-MILE running event starting and finishing at Himley Hall is planned for March 12.

The DirtRun Black Country Ultra is in four eight-mile stages and can be tackled by individuals, relay pairs or teams of four. It is being organised by Pulse Pursuits with Dudley and Sandwell councils and the Canal and River Trust.

One of the sections involves running through the nearly two-mile Netherton Canal Tunnel. The route which takes in Wombourne, Lower Penn, Wolverhampton, Coseley, Tipton, Netherton, Merry Hill, Brockmoor and Pensnett includes stretches on old railway lines, and canal towpaths. The minimum age for runners is 18 on race day.

The race will raise funds for the Mary Stevens Hospice with runners also invited to make a donation to the Canal and River Trust. Visit www.pulsepursuits.co.uk

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Commercial feature

DREAMLAND Brierley Hill, has been helping the people across the Midlands to get a good night's sleep since 1976 – and now Dreamland Bedding Centre is marking its 41th anniversary with their winter sale.

Located in Mill Street, Brierley Hill – just a few minutes' walk from the Merry Hill Centre – you'll find friendly and knowledgeable staff, all of whom understand the importance of getting the right bed for you.

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Founded by Mike Brown, Dreamland is an independent family business that is proud to serve the Black Country and the wider Midlands region.

Sleep experts

Dreamland has come a long way since it first opened its doors in Mill Street, Brierley Hill, in the spring of 1976 with just 12 beds on show, it has now become renowned for quality and service.

Dreamland stocks only manufacturers that are approved by the National Bed Federation, and offers premium handmade beds, with mattresses filled with natural fillings such as wool, cashmere, alpaca and silk help to regulate your body temperature.

Instead of a delivery charge, customers are asked to make a donation, all of which goes to charity.

Over the past few years, it has raised more than £125,000 for the Mary Stevens Hospice, thanks to the generosity of customers who give in lieu of delivery charge. Dreamland will even collect your old bed and assemble your divan – more reasons why you'll sleep soundly in your new bed!

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Naked Bed products have 15 per cent off and many headboards, bed frames and electric beds have been massively reduced along with some clearance models.

If you're looking to replace your tired, old bed with a new model, look no further – Dreamland Bedding Centre, with its large, free customer car park, is open seven days a week. Opening times are Monday to Saturday, 9am-5.30pm; Sundays 11am-4.30pm.

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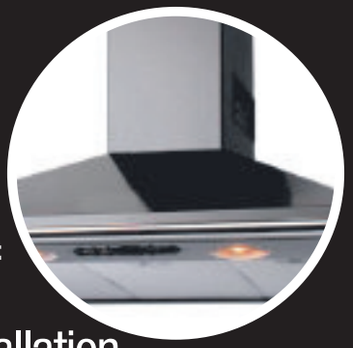

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Strictly fabulous and a perfect 10

REVIEW

Strictly Come Dancing – The Live Tour, Barclaycard Arena

FAB-U-LOUS. Well what else would you expect from the 10th anniversary of the Strictly Come Dancing live tour – definitely a 10 out of 10.

Only shock of the night at this glittering first night at the packed Barclaycard Arena was that the reigning champion Ore Oduba, who scored top marks for both his routines, did not even make the final two.

That was left to Danny Mac and Louise Redknapp, but Danny stole it on the night. I think, as it was the audience that was voting, the sight of his bare chest during his samba clinched it for the mostly female audience.

Louise would have been a far more worthy winner with her two stunning routines, the cowboy-style quickstep and the fierce and passionate paso doble.

Cheers

But the award for entertainment had to go to Ed Balls. He was as usual bottom of the leaderboard but that did not seem to matter to the many who cheered him on at every step.

He stole the night with his Gangnam-style routine and brought huge cheers when he managed the lift he so spectacularly failed to do in the TV series. Sighs of relief all round.

For sheer energy and enthusiasm, at the age of 71, full marks to Lesley Joseph who was giving her 'toyboy' professional a run for his money.

Lighting up the stage Daisy Lowe, who said that she had danced every day since the TV series finished, called it the 'best experience of her life'.

The three judges joined in the dancing and proved they have still got it. Head judge Len Goodman was joined by tour director Craig Revel Horwood and former Strictly professional Karen Hardy, who described the other two as the ' grumpy old men'

Keeping them all in check was host Anita Rani who Strictly fans will recall twirling her way into the quarter finals in 2015.

With two awards on the horizon, one for the TV show and the other for head judge Len, this glittering show continues to have the star factor.

Long may they keep on dancing.

Sue Attwater

The Strictly Come Dancing Live tour performers and professionals

Host Anita Rani, a series quarter finalist

Ed Balls and partner Katya Jones

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Fresh review into Christina's death is due to be published soon

A SECOND review into the tragic death of a Halesowen schoolgirl killed by a paranoid schizophrenic is a step closer to being published, following completion of the first draft.

NHS England commissioned the investigation into the death of Christina Edkins two years ago. Christina, aged 16, was fatally stabbed on a bus in Hagley Road, Birmingham, while on her way to Leasowes High School.

She was stabbed in March 2013 by Phillip Simelane, who was detained indefinitely under the Mental Health Act after pleading guilty to manslaughter on the grounds of diminished responsibility.

An initial inquiry by Birmingham Cross City Clinical Commissioning Group said Christina's death could have been prevented after it emerged Simelane had been released from prison with no supervision only months before the attack.

The fresh inquiry was launched because of the group's findings and the family's wishes. A spokesman for NHS England said: "A first draft of the investigation report has now been completed and is going through NHS England review and approvals processes. Findings from the investigation will be published in due course."

Drink-driver jailed after causing horrific crash

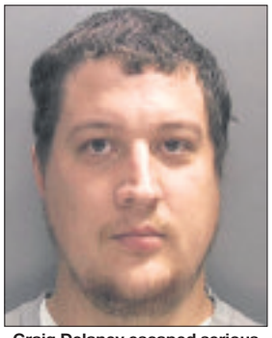
A DRINK-DRIVER was showing off, driving at more than twice the speed limit when involved in a crash that left two of his passengers with appalling injuries, a judge heard.

Craig Delaney, who had neither insurance nor a valid licence, was estimated to be travelling at 68mph in a 30 zone and on the wrong side of the road when he crashed into a wall, Wolverhampton Crown Court was told.

Impact

The 27-year-old lost control while swerving to miss an oncoming car, clipped the kerb and hurtled into a garden wall with such force the engine was torn out of the gold Vauxhall Corsa. The vehicle then rebounded into the path of another car whose driver, Mark Howl, could not avoid hitting the wreckage in Reddal Hill Road, Cradley Heath.

Mr Edward Soulsby, prosecuting, said front seat passenger Daniel Priest had his arm out of the window and it was almost severed by the impact with the low wall. Mr Howl found Delaney had been catapulted into the rear of the Corsa and was lying on top of badly injured Rebecca Burgess. Mr Soulsby added: "She was struggling for breath and Mr Howl pulled the defendant off her, possibly saving her life."



Craig Delaney escaped serious injury, unlike his two passengers

Mr Priest was rushed to hospital for emergency surgery but doctors could not save his arm. He also had a broken cheek bone, four broken ribs, a punctured lung and lacerated liver. The 26-year-old chef is likely to face life-long pain. Miss Burgess was in intensive care for six days. Delaney was not badly hurt.

Delaney had drunk up to four pints and several shots at a bar with Mr Priest when he linked up with Miss Burgess before going to a pub. Three hours after the crash on December 6, 2015, the defendant gave a blood-alcohol reading of 94 milligrams. The limit is 80.

Mr Simon Hunka, defending, conceded: "He cannot remember what happened in the incident but it must have had something to do with bravado. He made a terrible mistake."

Delaney of Woodcroft Close, Cradley Heath, admitted causing serious injury by dangerous driving, having excess alcohol, and not having insurance or licence. He was jailed for two years eight months and banned from driving for six years four months.

Judge Simon Ward said: "I can only conclude from the speed you were doing that you were trying to show off to those in the car in the most dangerous way."

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Highgrove outing on the agenda

Wollaston E TWG

CHAIRMAN Julie Willetts welcomed members to the January meeting with a hearty 'Happy New Year'. She stated all Christmas activities had been successful, and thanked both the committee, for their efforts in organising the festive party, and the choir for their participation in the carol services.

The chairman suggested any long-serving members should come forward for recognition and appreciation.

Sub-section reports followed, and names were taken for lunch at Birmingham College of Food. Trips to Highgrove and Haden Hill are to be confirmed. Jill Dunn reported that the floral art group would plan this year's programme at their next meeting, while the Amblers would not meet during January and February – but would resume their activities when hopefully better weather prevailed.

The speaker was Dave Tyler, Dudley councillor for Kingswinford North and Wall Heath ward. He gave a very interesting talk on his findings regarding his family tree dating back to the 1700s.

Apparently, earlier family members began life in the workhouse, hence the title of his talk – 'Workhouse to Council House'.

Competition winners were Glenys Allen and Elizabeth Grove and raffle prizes went to Brenda Adkin and Barbara Homer.

The next meeting is at 7.30pm on February 14 at St James' Church Hall, Wollaston.

Nostalgic mystery tour of Midlands

Dudley South Ladies Luncheon

CHAIRMAN Mary Jones was delighted that 30 members and one visitor had braved the particularly cold and snowy weather to attend the January meeting at The Lodge, Wellington Road, Dudley.

She wished everyone a healthy and happy new year and looked forward to seeing not only regular members but hopefully lots of visitors to see what a friendly club it is.

The traditional hot three-course lunch was once again excellent, followed by speaker Ian Bott who delighted everyone with a nostalgic mystery tour of the Midlands. It began in 1960 with a charabanc setting off from St Luke's Church, Wednesfield, and then a whistle stop journey visiting Lichfield, Shugborough, Biddulph Grange, various castles, quaint Cotswold villages, the Black and White trail through Herefordshire and lovely Shropshire countryside illustrating just how beautiful the Midlands really is.

The next luncheon would be on Friday, February 10 at The Lodge which would include the AGM followed by speaker Bob Broadfield and his involvement with showbusiness. March should be quite lively with entertainment by a ukulele group. For more information on the club, call the secretary on 01902 372984 or email maryjones30@sky.com

Collection cash goes to Acorns

Kingswinford TG

CHAIRMAN Enid Fennell opened the January meeting by wishing everyone a Happy New Year.

Among the items of business she reminded members that the annual subscriptions were now due and that volunteers for the committee for the forthcoming year were required.

The contributions for charity in lieu of Christmas cards totalled just over £57, while £71 was collected at the November meeting in aid of Acorns Children's Hospice. It was, agreed that both sums should go to Acorns.

Brenda Greenaway provided a lovely floral arrangement to brighten the room which reminded everyone that spring would be here soon. Josie Smith offered to wash up.

Scrabble group, Wednesday club, rambling group and luncheons clubs all made plans for the next few weeks.

The speaker was Mary Bodfish who spoke about Mad Dogs and Mary Marten, a wide ranging talk about a particular period in history.

The next group meeting will be on February 13 when Alan Peace will speak about working with animals and children. Non-members will be welcome as usual.

Talk on how to grow in new year

Black Country Fuchsia Society

THE next monthly meeting is on January 31 at Corpus Christi Social Centre, Griffiths Drive, Wednesfield, and then every last Tuesday of the month for rest of year.

Speakers for January are Pat Rogers and Gordon Reynolds speaking on how to go forward in the new year, growing standards, bonsai and encliandra fuchsia, in different shapes, and all other ways of growing fuchsias, including fuchsias for beginners.

Anyone is welcome to go along and see what the group does and, for anyone needing any help, members will do their best to accommodate them.

Membership is £3.50 per year with a few perks. Come and see first and make up your mind if you want to join after that.

Penney for thoughts as Neds singer reveals all

FROM rockstar to council promotions officer – Ned's Atomic Dustbin frontman Jonn Penney is to tell all at the Wolverhampton Literature Festival.

Jonn will be joined at the festival this weekend by author Martin Roach who wrote a book about the Stourbridge music scene back in the early 90s, which Ned's were part of.

The free-to-attend event will be entitled 'The Eight-Legged Atomic Dustbin Will Read Itself'. Jonn will be at The Slade Rooms tomorrow (Friday) at 7pm to discuss his experiences.

"The back story is that back in 1991, just as my band were starting to get some profile, there was a lad from Kingswinford called Martin Roach," said Jonn.

Copies

"He decided he wanted to be an author and write about the Stourbridge music scene, which he quite rightly thought would do well.

"He approached all three of the bands, but for whatever reason the only person to say yes right away was myself. So I invited him round for an interview and he put the book together from that.

"The book was called The Eight-Legged Atomic Dustbin Will Eat Itself – from Pop Will Eat Itself, Ned's Atomic Dustbin and The Wonder Stuff's debut album The Eight Legged Groove Machine.

"He then went up and down the country on his own to sell his book to record shops etc. And he went on to sell lots of copies. From there, he started up publishing firm Independent Music Press.

"Martin and I have got a lot in common. It's all about being independent.

Promotions officer Jonn Penney

The Neds in their heyday in 1992

We stuck to our guns and did things the way we wanted to do them. We wouldn't listen to other people and just got on with what we wanted to do."

He added that the Slade Rooms show would be the two of them asking each other questions which they would have liked to have been asked in their heyday.

"If people turn up, it will be because they want to know more about Martin and I," said Jonn.

Martin Roach is now a ghost writer as he dislikes being in the spotlight.

Jonn said: "I have an ego and I have enjoyed some of that adoration. Martin, in contrast, doesn't want any of it. He just wants to get on with it. It's a very Black Country attitude, actually. And the Stourbridge scene had a lot of roots in that way of thinking.

Among those taking part in the festival will be musicians, such as Miles Hunt, top-selling authors like Sathnam Sanghera, and comedic figures, for instance, Doreen Tipton.

There'll also be workshops, book readings, events with journalists and talks from poets.

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Reunited with lost cat after 14 years

Runaway moggy found – Rachel Wells, Tiger and Roger Colbourne at the Black Country Living Museum

THE purr-plexing origins of Tiger the cat, who for the past 14 years has made his home at the Black Country Living Museum, have been discovered at last.

A trip to the vet's revealed that the mysterious tabby, who has been adopted by the maintenance team at the museum, is the missing pet of veterinary nurse Rachel Wells.

One day Tiger, previously known as Snitch, decided to set up home in the grounds of the open air attraction off Tipton Road.

Roger Colbourne, who has been working at the museum for 27 years, quickly took a shine to their new resident and the pair became inseparable. For years Roger has fed and cared for Tiger, as he is now known. But a microchip scan revealed his owner was Rachel, who had never given up hope of finding her much-loved pet.

Posters

Rachel Wells, 34, who now lives near to the museum and works at White Cross Vets in Wolverhampton, added: "Tiger was 18 months old when he went to play out 14 years ago but he never returned. I spent months putting up posters and trying to find him. Each time I moved house I always updated my contact details on his microchip. When he finally reappeared after all these years I couldn't believe it."

Roger, 70, said: "I have grown extremely close to Tiger and can't imagine life without his companionship. I lost my dog Rose over Christmas but seeing Tiger every day really helped me through that." Seeing the bond between Tiger and Roger, Rachel has decided to register the cat's chip to Roger, so the cat can stay at the museum.

Rising crime is wake-up call – chief

CRIME is on the increase in the West Midlands, according to new figures which show a rising number of burglaries, sexual offences and violence.

By Nathan Briant

The number of recorded crimes in the region rose nine per cent to 194,550 in the year up to September last year. Out of those, 46,842 offences were violence against a person – a 20 per cent increase.

Burglaries rose by 18 per cent to 22,997 and sexual offences increased by 13 per cent to 4,638 offences.

But the number of thefts decreased by four per cent to 94,331 and drug offences fell six per cent to 5,364.

West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner David Jamieson said the region's figures showed crime is 'changing and not falling' and should act as a 'wake-up call to the government'.

He said this was partly down to an increase in cyber crime, although the figures from the Government did not break down the number of cyber crimes in the West Midlands.

Nationally, there were 3.6 million fraud cases and two million computer misuse offences in the same period. It is the first time these have been recorded in released figures.

Mr Jamieson said: "These statistics should be a wake-up call to the government. They show once again that crime is changing and not falling.

"West Midlands Police is facing more complex threats than ever before and should receive the resources it needs to deal with those threats. Instead of which next year's budget will be cut by a further £6 million on top of the £130 million already lost since 2010."

Staff numbers in the force have been slashed by a 23.6 per cent since April 2010.

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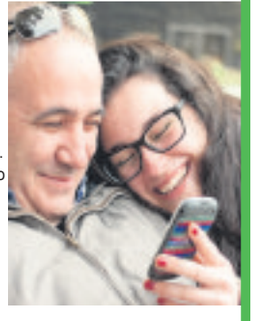

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Side by side – two Handley Page bombers at Le Bourget

Charles Wallbank in his 1914 Humber behind his house

Charles's colleagues in front of a Spad fighter

Charles, second left, in front of a wartime RE.8

French locals examining a crashed plane

When communication by air really took off

MEMORY LANE

By Alec Brew

IN January 1919 the RAF's No 2 Squadron began flights from London's Croydon Airport to Le Bourget, Paris, ferrying delegates and mail to the Peace Conference at Versailles.

For the first time ever aviation played a part in international diplomacy, and the value of air travel was established. One of the mechanics keeping the planes in the air at Le Bourget was Charles Wallbank from Park Village, Wolverhampton.

He had served in the war as a mechanic, in a squadron operating RE.8 reconnaissance aircraft.

Then, at war's end, found himself posted to Le Bourget to look after the huge numbers of aircraft involved, which featured the largest British aircraft then in service, the Handley Page O/400 heavy bomber, serving as a transport.

Quicker

Rarely have so many been seen on an airfield at any one time, and many of them had been built by the Birmingham & Midland Carriage Co. in Smethwick.

It was a long way from the utilitarian interior of a wood and fabric bomber to the likes of Air Force One, but communications were so much quicker by air, than by trains and cross-channel ferry.

The operation proved the worth of what was to become the premier international air route, and established air travel as a feature of modern life.

After the war Charles came home to live at Glenmore, 144 Cannock Road and used his skills to become a racing driver.

In 1925 he found a 1914 4-cylinder 3,458cc Humber in Folkstone, and brought it home to refurbish it. In 1929 he actually won a race in it at the famous Brooklands racing circuit. Motor racing was not his only pastime, however, in the loft over the garage at the rear of his house he bred lop-eared rabbits.

An amazing total of 21 Handley Page bombers at Le Bourget

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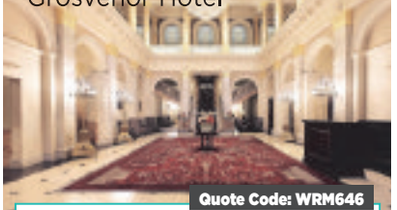

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Way into work or education

YOUNG adults are being offered the chance to take part in a free programme that will help them get into education and work.

The project, run by Black Country Impact, is offering 16 to 29-year-olds a tailored programme which includes providing a key worker or mentor to help them. Dudley Council is leading the project and funding is from the EU's European Social Fund and Youth Employment Initiative.

Leader of Dudley Council, Councillor Pete Lowe said: "Since the Black Country Impact formally launched last year it has been busy building relationships with local employers, training providers and educators and is delighted to announce that hundreds of young adults are already having a difference made to their lives. I would strongly encourage both local businesses and 16 to 29 year olds across the Black Country to get involved."

Visit www.dudley.gov.uk/bcimpact or call (01384) 813975.

Child abuse video pervert is jailed for repeat offence after police raid home

A PERVERT who kept thousands of pictures and videos of child abuse has been jailed – five years after avoiding prison for a similar offence.

Paul Fellows, aged 39, had been previously caught keeping abuse pictures in 2012 and received a three-year community order.

Fellows continued to download and view abuse even as he attended courses designed to stop him doing so, Wolverhampton Crown Court heard.

He was found with indecent images when police raided his home in Ash Road, Dudley on June 30, 2016.

Hundreds of those were of the worst sexual abuse, classified as category A.

Police had traced an internet provider address viewing abuse to Fellows' home. Just moments before officers went to arrest him, Fellows threw a hard drive out of a window. Loaded with illegal images and still warm to the touch, police said it had clearly been used moments before their arrival.

Online

He was also found to be using file sharing software which could have distributed more pictures online.

Fellows was found to be in possession of 102 pictures and 194 videos classed as category A.

A further 201 pictures and 345 videos were marked as category B. An additional 3,699 pictures and 29 videos were classed as category C. That was a total of 4,570 indecent images and videos.

For Fellows, Miss Nicole Steers said he was suffering from significant health problems, including Crohn's disease.

Miss Steers said Fellows was a keen computer gamer Fellows and 'appears to be a social recluse' who was living in a 'world of internet.'

She added that he regularly wore a motorcycle helmet around people so he did not need to show his face.

Police requested that Fellows be banned from keeping any electronic device with a capacity greater than 32GB but Miss Steers said that he feared using such limited devices would curtail his computer gaming hobby.

Recorder Miles Watkins increased that capacity to 64GB and said if that stopped Fellows having fun on a computer then 'he has only himself to blame.'

He told Fellows: "You were found to have a number of computers and hard drives and a significant volume of material, indecent material. Videos and pictures of children were found."

Fellows was jailed for two years and eight months. He had earlier admitted three counts of distributing child pornography and a further three of possessing child pornography images.

Statue repairs to take weeks

The Billy Wright Statue outside Molineux was badly damaged when hit by a car

WORK to repair the Billy Wright statue, which was badly damaged after being hit by a car, will not start for around a month.

The full extent of the damage has still to be assessed and the repairs approved by the insurers before the work can begin, Wolves said last week.

The publicly-funded £50,000 monument to the England and Wolves hero stands outside Molineux stadium on Waterloo Road.

A car collided with the statue in the early hours of January 15.Wolves spokesman Paul Berry said: "That process is unlikely to start for at least a month. All the debris and slate has now been removed, so the statue is looking a lot tidier and we are all looking forward to seeing it returned to its former glory."

The club is keeping the Wright family updated about the restoration work, he added.

The 9ft bronze statue was unveiled in 1996 by Billy's widow Joy, who called it 'a wonderful work of art.' It is considered one of the finest football statues in the country.

The sculpture depicts the former Wolves and England captain – who earned 105 caps for his country – leading out his team. He died in 1994, aged 70.

The £50,000 funding for the statue was raised by public subscription. A plaque at the back of the tribute thanks 'the generosity of the people of Wolverhampton' and 'football fans everywhere.'

The statue is placed within a circle of slate that matches the pedestal. Around it are placed a series of small slate-clad pillars mounted with bronze cubes.

A 30-year-old man has been bailed on suspicion of dangerous driving and drink-driving in relation to the incident.

Mortgage business is up at building society

THE Tipton and Coseley Building Society's mortgage completions were up £14.5 million last year.

Its mortgage team said the housing loans were up from £52.07m in 2015 to £66.58m – an increase of almost 28 per cent. The society's mortgage applications were also up £21.18m to £92.94m, a steep rise of close on 30 per cent.

Richard Newton, the Tipton's chief executive, said: "A wide range of products and a sensible approach to lending have helped buoy mortgage completion and application figures.

"We've worked hard over the past 12 months to widen our mortgage range and we remain committed to individually assessing all applications – factors which have both contributed to these upbeat figures.

"I'm pleased that our mortgage business achieved such success last year and I'm confident that these results will set the scene for 2017 and beyond."

Hair-raising fundraiser

A 12-year-old from Wordsley has had 12 inches cut off her hair for charity after she lost both of her grandads to cancer.

Cydnee Voice donated her hair to the Little Princess Trust, a charity which provides real hair wigs, free of charge, to boys and girls across the UK and Ireland that have lost their own hair through cancer treatment.

Cydnee raised £300 for the charity. Her mother, Donna Voice, said: "I'm extremely proud of her." Visit www.littleprincesses.org.uk

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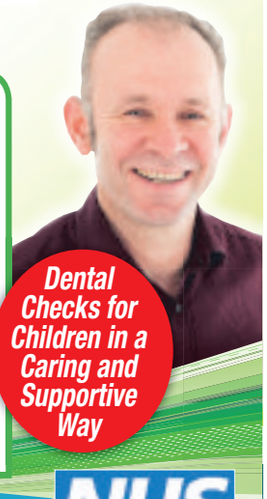

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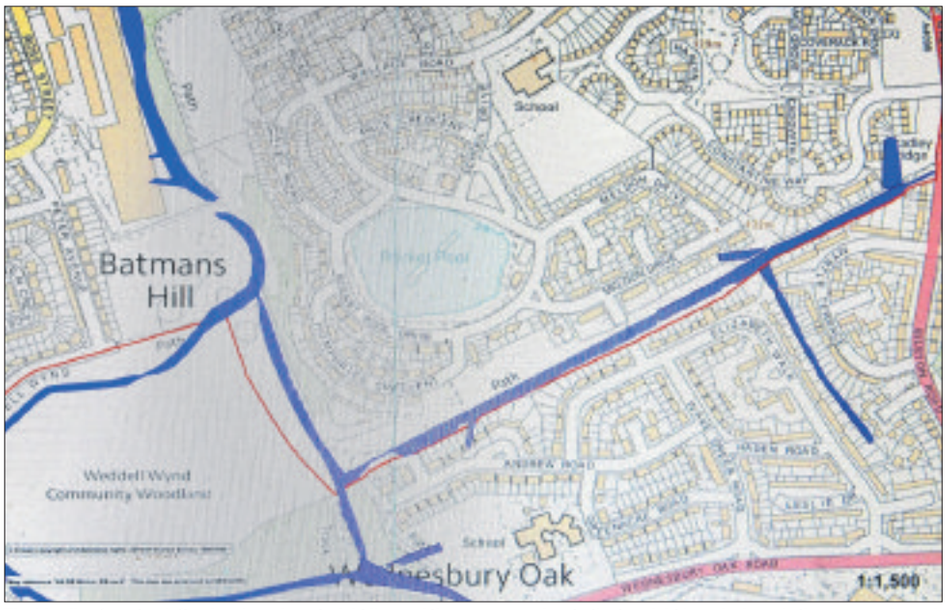
Picture of 9 Locks taken in the 1950s



The blue line from top left going down in a straight line and then across and up to the top right in an L shape is the proposed canal

Picture was on display of the Ironworks in the 1800s

'Rebirth' of canal line

AN historic canal line which was buried more than half a century ago could be brought back to life as part of a £7.5 million restoration project.

The Bradley Arm Canal which runs through Wolverhampton,Walsall and Sandwell, could once again carry boats if plans are given approval.

The proposals moved a step forward when they were shown to residents at a meeting held by project organisers who say the feedback has been 'around 60 to 70 per cent' in favour.

Project organisers said the canal would provide numerous benefits to the community, such as health, wellbeing, heritage and education. But some residents protested, claiming the new canal would increase anti-social behaviour and rodent population around nearby homes.

The former canal line, which was closed in 1954, stretches around 1.5 miles from Bradley Lane in Bilston to Bilston Road in Tipton. Cash to deliver the project would by funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund. Organisers from the Inland Waterways Association would have to apply for the funds. The Wednesbury Oak Loop Canal would join up with the Walsall Canal if the former stretch of canal were to be revived. Project organisers say the plans are only proposals at the moment. Three meetings have been held with residents since March to gauge to the reaction of communities living nearby.

The latest one was held at Tipton Sports Academy Social Club where heated exchanges between residents took place. A man who asked to remain anonymous, said: "We will get more rats as a result. The canal boats are also noisy and produce smoke."

But Derek Nicholls, aged 75 said: "If you look at the wider picture, the development will be good for the area."

Stephen Burt from the Canal & River Trust and West Midlands Waterways Partnership

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How much? Drivers face fuel price lottery across region

THE cheapest and most expensive petrol stations in Dudley have been revealed with nearly 10p per litre difference between garages.

Drivers are facing a lottery of fuel costs at the pumps, according to figures.

Asda at Merry Hill and in Brierley Hill were the cheapest for unleaded petrol, costing just £1.177 per litre on the weekend. For diesel, it was Texaco Park Dixons Greens Service Station in Dudley where a litre cost £1.179.

For unleaded, this was followed by Morrisons in Kingswinford, which offered it at £1.187.

The most expensive garage was in Halesowen, at Esso Falcon Service Station, Bromsgrove Road, where the price for unleaded was £1.239 per litre, diesel was £1.269 a litre, at the weekend. The prices were the latest available for each station on the PetrolPrices.com website.

Ninder Johal, member of the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership and former president of the Black Country Chamber of Commerce, said: "I think prices will go up because of a few factors. Firstly the oil companies producing the oil have reduced the supply, meaning there is less to fill a higher demand. Also, with Brexit, the currency has devalued which means the price we pay for oil is more. The majority of the money we pay for fuel is taxation by the UK government."

Across the whole of the Black Country and South Staffordshire,the cheapest station for unleaded petrol was at the Asda garage off Queslett Road in Great Barr, at £1.147 per litre. The cheapest garage for diesel at Sainsbury's in Cannock, where it cost £1.169 per litre.

The BP station at Norton Canes Services M6 Toll came out as the most expensive in the area, costing £1.349 per litre of unleaded petrol and diesel costing £1.369.

Shining a light on laughter at The Lamp

Pub landlord Tom Comyns and comedian Wayne Beese getting ready for the monthly Loffs at The Lamp comedy nights

A COMEDIAN is hoping to bring the loffs back to a Black Country pub.

The Lamp Tavern, Dudley, which was given the best comedy club in the Midlands title in 2010, will begin hosting comedy nights again.

Dudley comic Wayne Beese is aiming to put the pub back in the spotlight by running monthly Loffs at The Lamp events.

The pub, on High Street, once hosted the likes of top comedians Reginald D Hunter, Tim Vine and Rhod Gilbert.

Wayne, who is a reporter at the Shropshire Star, said: "I began gigging as a comedian in the middle of 2013 and I did a spot at Stourbridge Town Hall. A few months later, my wife phoned me at work to say a bloke had knocked on the door looking for me.

"It turned out he'd been in the front row at the town hall and wanted to know if I would go and do a surprise 10 minute slot for his mate's 50th birthday at The Lamp Tavern.

"I went and did it and immediately fell in love with the room there."

The 36-year-old former Dudley Chronicle reporter added: "Live comedy works best in small, intimate rooms. The Brewhouse at The Lamp is a great room. I will host the shows as resident compere and introduce acts hand-picked by myself."

The nights will be held on the last Friday of the month, starting with a triple bill on February 24 featuring Rob Deering, Nick Page and Daliso Chaponda, all for £10. Tickets are available from www.skiddle.com/e/12881718.

Lord Cobham talks about his ancestral home

A RARE opportunity to hear Lord Cobham give a talk about his ancestral home near Stourbridge, Hagley Hall, was given at a retirement living development.

The 12th Viscount Cobham visited McCarthy and Stone's Sanderson Court development on Park Road in Hagley.

An audience comprising of history enthusiasts, Hagley residents and McCarthy and Stone homeowners, gained an insight into the compelling back story of Hagley Hall, which dates back to the 1700s.

The talk included details of the ongoing restoration of the hall and its grounds.

Shelley Morewood, sales executive at Sanderson Court, explained: "We were highly honoured to welcome Lord Cobham to Sanderson Court. Everyone in attendance was very interested to discover more about the fascinating history of Hagley Hall. Hosting his talk was a true privilege."

Charity walk to be held along the canal routes

A CHARITY canal walk in May will raise funds for the Mary Stevens Hospice in Stourbridge.

People taking part in the walk on May 21 will be walking to The Maverick pub in Brettell Lane, Amblecote, along the Staffordshire and Worcestershire and Stourbridge canals. Those taking part will have a choice of a 15 mile route from Stourport, nine miles from Wolverley or four-and-a-half miles from Kinver.

Walkers are encouraged to take their dogs with them and get family and friends involved.

The walk will coincide with a team of men from the West Midlands Fire Service and The Maverick, who will be walking 125 miles from Borth on the Welsh coast to The Maverick in just 56 hours during the same weekend.

Valli tribute at hotel in aid of hospice funds

FOLLOWING a successful tour of the UK, Stephen James will be performing his critically acclaimed Frankie Valli tribute show for one night, in support of the Mary Stevens Hospice.

The show documents the rise of the Four Seasons frontman in the style of the Jersey Boys stage show, with a professional narrator. Stephen will perform at The Granary Hotel in Shenstone, near Kidderminster, on March 23.

Diane Moore, lottery and promotions manager at Mary Stevens Hospice, said: "A couple of members of the team here have actually seen Stephen perform a number of times over the last few years, and we've always joked that it'd be amazing to have him do something for us. Then one day I think we realised that there was no harm in actually asking him."

Included in the £24.95 ticket price is the performance and a full evening meal. To book tickets call the hospice fundraising team on (01384) 377 778 or email diane@mshfundraising.co.uk

ADVERTISEMENT

Former midwife's smile reborn

'I'd grown tired of living my life around my teeth'

Former Dudley community midwife Vicki Ball, left, is full of smiles after getting new teeth and an implant solution to a long-standing stabilisation problem. 'I love my new teeth,' she says

MEETING Vicki Ball is all about the smiles – lots of them. She's generous with her compliments, can't wait for her next holiday adventure and has the most infectious of laughs.

Her company is light and she's gushing with the praise about her new look.

A retired community midwife who was based at the former Wordsley Hospital, the bubbly 60-something-year-old is quick to affirm: "I love my new teeth and they look natural, don't they?"

Adding: "You can't tell they're not my own," Vicki admits her smile has not always been her favourite attribute. "I've always had trouble with my teeth; even as a young girl they crumbled and my gums used to bleed. Even though I was diligent about looking after them, they still let me down," she adds.

Two years ago, Vicki finally lost her remaining teeth. "I really don't know why my teeth were so bad, but I was the youngest of eight children and I understand my mother's priorities did not include teaching me how to brush my teeth. She had more pressing priorities of how she was going to put food on the table," Vicki recalls.

A teenager by the time she had her first tooth brush, she is convinced she couldn't have done more to save her own teeth.

"For the last 18 months I've put up with ill-fitting and badly made dentures. My gums were always sore and the bottom denture was unstable.

Researching options

"My top teeth I could secure with a fixative, but for the bottom it was a waste of time – as soon as I had anything to eat the stability was over," says Vicki.

Her diet became restricted, avoiding beef and crispy fruits like apples.

Frustrated by the appearance and function of her teeth – they seemed to be set too far back, Vicky says – she started researching her options.

"I'd grown tired of living my whole life around my teeth. I never really stopped going out, but when I did, I was always thinking ahead where I could go to take my teeth out. They were just so uncomfortable."

A self-confessed lover of travel overseas – "it's my hobby" – Vicki saw an article in her local newspaper about Steven Burchell Dip CDT RCS(Eng) and his work at the Denture Clinic in North Street, Dudley.

North Street's dental implant surgeon, Dr Owain Rees (left) BDS, DGDP (UK) Dip Imp Dent (UCL) GDC 61576 with principal Steven Burchell Dip CDT RCS(Eng) GDC 108353

"I'd seen a piece about suction dentures and implant retained dentures and there seemed to be a solution for me," she says.

After seeing Steven and implant surgeon Dr Owain Rees BDS, DGDP (UK) DIP IMP DENT (UCL), Vicki's treatment included two implants to stabilise a lower over denture and the prescribing of high quality traditional upper dentures to help support her facial features. "From start to finish it took 14 weeks, but it was worth the wait. When I first saw my teeth in the mirror, I thought they looked just like real teeth and . . . they feel like my own teeth.

Such a relief

"My husband, Terry, couldn't believe they were so good. Not to have to keep thinking about my teeth when I'm out is such a relief," she says.

Steven says: "Mrs Ball needed dentures that would offer proper support to her facial features.

"These days the term 'facelift' dentures is banded about. The claim is spurious, but with the correct setting of teeth, the effect is to lift the facial structures in the same way natural healthy gums and teeth support tissues and muscles. I'm very please to have been part of giving a new birth the Vicki's smile."

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Denture Clinic

Stourbridge Chronicle Thursday, January 26, 2017

Plants for feathered friends to enjoy too

It's time to dust off your binoculars for the Big Garden Birdwatch. Hannah Stephenson looks at bird-friendly plantings and how to attract more feathered friends

NO doubt bird feeders and baths will be filled by many of us in the run-up to the annual Big Garden Birdwatch, the world's largest garden wildlife survey, which this year takes place from Saturday to Monday.

Yet there are other ways to attract birds to your garden in the long term if you plant species which will provide them with both food and shelter.

Blackbirds and thrushes love the fruits and berries of plants including rowan, berberis and pyracantha, while ivy berries, which ripen later, are invaluable to hungry birds in late winter and early spring when food can be scarce.

If you have room, consider planting an apple tree – birds love both cooking and dessert apples and crab apples, whose windfalls can provide them with food in the leaner months. Early varieties of eating apples such as 'Beauty of Bath' and 'Discovery' don't keep well, so pick and eat what you need and leave the rest for your blackbirds, song and mistle thrushes, chaffinches, redwings and fieldfares.

Of course, you don't want the birds stripping your garden of all its colour, so consider planting some shrubs whose fruits they don't particularly like, including skimmia, aucuba and the guilder rose (Viburnum opulus).

Hedging can also provide a great nesting site for birds, shelter during frosty nights and food. Bare root hedging is widely available from nurseries and garden centres from November to mid-April.

Holly is slow-growing, but is among the most effective hedges for birds. It ensures windproof shelter on frosty nights, nesting opportunities in spring and berries that attract blackbirds, thrushes and other birds. In spring, insects will be attracted to its flowers.

The hawthorn is another great hedging plant if you want to attract birds. The dark red haws are a magnet for redwings and fieldfares in the winter, and its prickly stems ensure good nesting places for finches, dunnocks, robins and blackbirds.

The black berries of the dogwood, a British native, will attract birds including finches, robins, pigeons, thrushes and starlings.

A range of relatively simple measures can be recommended which could help reduce the risk of cats catching garden birds, especially where food is being put out for birds, according to the RSPB.

Place spiny plants (such as holly) or an uncomfortable surface around the base of the feeding station to prevent cats sitting underneath it.

Plant wildlife-friendly vegetation, such as prickly bushes and thick climbers in the garden to provide secure cover for birds. These should be close enough to where birds feed to provide cover, but not so close that cats can use it to stalk birds. This kind of planting may also provide food and nesting sites.

If you can bear to have an area of brambles in a quiet corner of the garden, birds should gravitate towards it. Blackbirds, thrushes, chaffinches, starlings, robins, pheasants, foxes, mice and other small mammals eat the fruits, while robins, wrens, thrushes, blackbirds, warblers and finches will nest in bramble and small mammals use it for protection from predators.

So, what are we likely to see during Big Garden Birdwatch?

Sightings of well-known species such as starlings and song thrushes experienced another drop during the event last year, although we spotted more than 8.5 million birds in total. The house sparrow remained top of the Big Garden Birdwatch rankings, with starling and blue tit rounding off the top three.

Daniel Hayhow, RSPB conservation scientist, says: "With over half a million people now regularly taking part, coupled with over 30 years worth of data, Big Garden Birdwatch allows us to monitor trends and helps us understand how birds are doing.

"With results from so many gardens, we are able to create a 'snapshot' of the birds visiting at this time of year across the UK. Even if you see nothing during your Big Garden Birdwatch hour, that's important information too, so please let us know."

Big Garden Birdwatch takes place from January 28-30. For more information, visit www.rspb.org.uk/birdwatch

Heather provides a welcome burst of colour at this time of year

A carpet of colour from pink and purple to white

BEST OF THE BUNCH – Heather

HEATHER provides the burst of colour you need at this time of year, whether in designated heather borders, alpine gardens or pots, in colours ranging from deep pink and purple to white.

They make a fantastic carpet of colour in front of evergreen shrubs and E. carnea varieties will grow in slightly alkaline soil as well as acid. Some heathers will even give you fragrant flowers, such as Erica x veitchii 'Exeter', which bears masses of elegant bell-shaped scented flowers opening from rosy pink buds. These evergreen shrubs do best in well-drained, acid soil in full sun. If you are planting them in a pot, go for ericaceous compost or John Innes and don't let them dry out or become waterlogged.

GOOD ENOUGH TO EAT – Kale

KEEN vegetable growers should now be harvesting kale, a winter stalwart brassica which is a gardener's delight, being that's it's hugely hardy and will tolerate poor soil, pigeons, cabbage root fly and club root.

However, it's not popular because of its reputation for being bitter, particularly when overcooked. So, choose a variety known for its good flavour, such as Red Russian, and follow a few rules: only pick young shoots which have just been subjected to frost and cook them quickly in a small amount of water. Serve with melted butter or chop up the leaves and serve them in winter salads. Sow seeds thinly in May in shallow drills in a sunny spot and when they emerge, thin the seedlings to around 8cm apart in the rows. When they are 10-15cm high they can be transplanted to their final spot, making sure you water the rows the day before.

WHAT TO DO THIS WEEK

1. Discard any stored vegetables that are rotting
2. Prune wisteria
3. Create a new compost heap
4. Continue to plant bare root bushes and shrubs when the ground isn't too wet or frozen
5. Fork or dig over vacant ground in beds and borders to prepare it for planting
6. Sow French beans in pots in the greenhouse for an early crop
7. Remove faded leaves from cabbages and Brussels sprouts

Amazing sight as seeds pave way for new life

ROSS UNDERWOOD

Head Gardener at Hodnet Hall

JANUARY feels rather flat, a time of nothingness after the rush of Christmas and before anything else really takes off.

There has been altogether too much grey sky, cold and rain recently.

In such weather all gardeners should stay off the soil whilst it is saturated to avoid compacting it.

Clay soils like mine are especially prone to becoming a sticky mess that smears onto your boots and tools.

Plenty of humus content in the form of thick annual mulches will ameliorate this to some extent but clay soils are always hungry for more.

My motto is to get off and stay off!

If you are lucky enough to have a lighter soil or can work from boards or paths without stepping on the soil too much then there is plenty to do.

I have been busy cutting back the growth of herbaceous perennials in our long herbaceous border.

The border is backed by a high brick wall that retains and radiates heat in summer.

Above the border is a terrace topped by wisteria which can be pruned now back to one or two buds from last years growth.

The wall itself holds a collection of wall shrubs such as Magnolia grandiflora, Jasminum nudiflorum (winter jasmine) and roses as well as climbers including clematis.

Flowering

Part of maintaining the border includes pruning, training and tying in these shrubs and climbers so that they do not overshadow the perennials.

Roses should be bent over and tied in so that they send up more flowering stems in the summer.

Any growth which protruded horizontally from the wall should be cut back otherwise it will end up taking over.

It may seem harsh but is a case of sparing the rod and spoiling the child; figuratively speaking.

There is work too in the greenhouse where seeds can be sown for those who are lucky enough to have some heat or on the windowsill inside.

Though to return to the border, I am always amazed by the beauty of seeds and seed heads.

Seeds are of course what a plant's life is all about.

To spread a version of itself in seed form is the ultimate aim of the growth and life cycle of a plant.

All of its structures, from leaves to stems and flowers is dedicated to this purpose.

Some plants grow tall like Eupatorium, (known as 'joe pie weed') in order to hold the flowers and seeds on stout rigid stems above competing plants.

Others such as Cephalaria gigantea have wiry stems that thread through surrounding plants. Members of the umbelliferace which include the popular border plant bronze fennel, (Foeniculum ssp)' have flattened flower heads where the seeds are held aloft by a small and intricate framework of tiny stems.

Seeds are often dispersed by the air and the seed heads of asters demonstrate this perfectly being held in fluffy clusters waiting to be released and send on their way by the wind.

It is worth looking closely as we clear away the debris of our plants at the true architecture which nature has invented and at how form is allied to function in the natural world.

The poet and academic Wendell Berry must have had a similar feeling when he wrote his short poem:

The Peace of Wild Things

When despair grows in me
and I wake in the night at the least sound
in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,
I go and lie down where the wood drake
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.
I come into the peace of wild things
who do not tax their lives with forethought
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.
And I feel above me the day-blind stars
waiting for their light. For a time
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.

An intricate framework of tiny stems holds up the flattened fennel seed heads

Fluffy clusters of aster seed heads, waiting to be released

Sedum starting to show signs of new growth

fast theticket

Buddy story

Boys on tour – P 29

NATIVE MONSTER
Entertainment Unleashed

Shaw thing

See Page 29

For full listings see **Express & Star** every Friday

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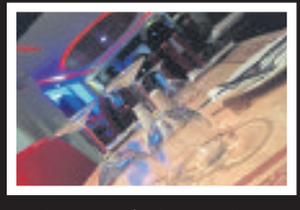

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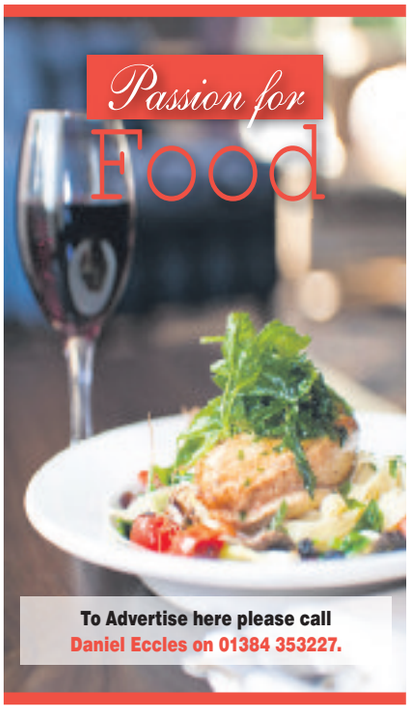

SOCIAL GROUP FOR UNATTACHED 50+ SINGLES

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Our group has regular meetings at local venues. Come and have a chat.

If you are interested please telephone

Elaine 01384 827600
John 01384 443464
Janet 01299 403155

Barbara Dickson

Wednesday, 7.30pm
Town Hall, Birmingham
The Scottish singer-songwriter draws on her folk roots as well as her hits, such as January February, Answer Me, Another Suitcase In Another Hall and Caravan Song.
Visit **thsh.co.uk**

Menace Beach

Thursday, 7.30pm
Hare and Hounds, Kings Heath
Scuzzy grunge rock from the noisy Leeds duo, who released new single Give Blood last week. Support from Birmingham band Mutes.
See **hareandhoundskingsheath.skiddletickets.com**

Love

Until February 11
The Rep Studio, Birmingham
The experiences of those in poverty and temporary accomodation are examined in this hard-hitting new drama from Alexander Zeldin, which was recently seen at the National Theatre.
See **birmingham-rep.co.uk**

Crazy Town

Monday, 7pm
Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton
Come my baby, come, come, my baby, and see this 90s rap-rock outfit from California still fronted by Seth Binzer (AKA Shifty Shellshock, pictured), following a stint in rehab.
See **wolvescivic.co.uk**

ROCK & METAL

U2-2 – Tribute to U2
Tonight, £10 - £12
The Robin 2,
Bilston,
WV14 7LJ.
Call 01902 401211

Legends Of Rock
Tonight, £3
The River Rooms,
Stourbridge,
DY8 1JN.
Call 01384 397 177
or 07986 577 661

Stanley Dee – Steely Dan tribute
Tonight, £6 - £7
The RoadHouse Birmingham,
Kings Norton, B30 3DZ.
Call 0121 246 2273

Independent Venue Week showcase feat. Rinse + Fears Chella + Alma
Tonight, £5
The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent,
ST1 1DR.
Call 01782 214991

Quadrophenia Night
Tomorrow,
O2 Academy Birmingham,
B1 1DB.
Call 0121 622 8250

The Sensational 60's Experience
Tomorrow,
Wolverhampton Grand Theatre,
WV1 1DE.
Call 01902 42 92 12

Nonsuch + Byron Hare + Yung Jimmys Big Ideas
Tomorrow,
Six Eight Kafe, Birmingham,
B2 5HG.
Call 0121 448 8089

Juyo + Timmas + LCD – part of Independent Venue Week 2017
Sun, £3
The RoadHouse Birmingham,
Kings Norton, B30 3DZ.
Call 0121 246 2273

Tyketto
Mon, £16 - £18
The Robin 2, Bilston,
WV14 7LJ.
Call 01902 401211

Black Sabbath
Thu,
Genting Arena, Birmingham,
B40 1NT.
Call 0121 780 4141

Roadhouse Presents: Rock/Indie Showcase
Thu, £4
The RoadHouse Birmingham,
Kings Norton, B30 3DZ.
Call 0121 246 2273

The Roy Orbison Story
Thu, £22
Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury,
SY3 8FT.
Call 01743 281281

CLUBBING

After Dark Launch Party w/ Cause & Affect, Stanton Warriors
Tonight – tomorrow,
The Rainbow Venues,
Digbeth,
Birmingham,
B9 4AG.
Call 0121 771 1521

The Weekend Anthems performed by Killerstream
Tomorrow, £8
The River Rooms,
Stourbridge,
DY8 1JN.
Call 01384 397 177
or 07986 577 661

Solardo Sessions Birmingham
Tomorrow - Sun,
The Rainbow Venues, Digbeth,
Birmingham, B9 4AG.
Call 0121 771 1521

Playaz : Birmingham
Tomorrow - Sun,
The Rainbow Venues, Digbeth,
Birmingham, B9 4AG.
Call 0121 771 1521

JAZZ, SOUL, BLUES MOTOWN & REGGAE

The UB40 Experience
Tomorrow, £7 - £8
The RoadHouse Birmingham,
Kings Norton, B30 3DZ.
Call 0121 246 2273

Paul Jones and Dave Kelly
Tomorrow,
Festival Drayton Centre,
Market Drayton, TF9 3AX.
Call 01630 654444

The Glenn Miller Orchestra
Sun,
Wolverhampton Grand Theatre,
WV1 1DE.
Call 01902 42 92 12

Jazz Tuesdays
Tue,
Spotted Dog, Digbeth,
Birmingham, B12 0NH.
Call 0121 772 3822

Live Jazz Broadcast
Wed, £5 - £10
Birmingham Conservatoire, Birmingham City University,
Edgbaston, B3 3HG.
Call 0121 331 5901

POP

ABBA + Bee Gees (tributes)
Tomorrow, £12.50 - £15
The Robin 2, Bilston,
WV14 7LJ.
Call 01902 401211

Thank ABBA For The Music
Tomorrow, £21.50 - £23.50
Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury,
SY3 8FT.
Call 01743 281281

FOLK, COUNTRY & ACOUSTIC

The Acoustic Sessions
Tue,
The Jam House,
Birmingham,
B31QU.
Call 0121 200 3030

Ray Cooper
Wed, £11
Red Lion Folk Club,
Birmingham,
B14 7LY.
Call 0121 444 2803

CLASSICAL

Nights On Broadway
Tonight,
Wolverhampton Grand Theatre,
WV1 1DE.
Call 01902 42 92 12

Junior Conservatoire Orchestral Concert
Tomorrow, £5 - £7
Birmingham Conservatoire, Birmingham City University,
Edgbaston, B3 3HG.
Call 0121 331 5901

Birmingham Philharmonic Orchestra
Sun, £15 - £40
Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury,
SY3 8FT.
Call 01743 281281

Beethoven's Fifth
Sun, Thu,
CBSO Centre, Birmingham,
B1 2LF.
Call 0121 616 6500

KS3: A Journey Across the Western World
Mon - Tue,
CBSO Centre, Birmingham,
B1 2LF.
Call 0121 616 6500

Liebeslieder (Elouise Waterhouse)
Thu, £6 - £10
Birmingham Conservatoire, Birmingham City University,
Edgbaston, B3 3HG.
Call 0121 331 5901

THEATRE

Fiddler on the Roof
Tonight,
Stourbridge Town Hall, DY8 1YE.
Call 01384 812960

Jackson Live
Tonight,
Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent,
ST1 1AP.
Call 0844 871 7649

Someone Like You – The Adele Songbook
Tonight,
New Alexandra Theatre,
Birmingham, B5 4DS.
Call 0844 871 3011

The Carpenters Story
Tomorrow,
New Alexandra Theatre,
Birmingham,
B5 4DS.
Call 0844 871 3011

Simon Weston: My Life, My Story
Tomorrow, £17.50
Artrix, Bromsgrove, B60 1PQ.
Call 01527 871580

Akaar 2017 Showcase Performance
Tomorrow,
The Old Rep Theatre,
Birmingham, B5 4DY.
Call 0121 359 9444

The Very Hungry Caterpillar Show
Mon - Tue,
New Alexandra Theatre,
Birmingham, B5 4DS.
Call 0844 871 3011

Il Trovatore (ROH Live)
Tue, £14.50
Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury,
SY3 8FT.
Call 01743 281281
and
Tue,
MAC, Cannon Hill Park,
Birmingham, B12 9QH.
Call 0121 446 3232
and
Tue,
Light House, Wolverhampton,
WV1 1HT.
Call 01902 716055

Evita
Tue - Thu,
Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent,
ST1 1AP.
Call 0844 871 7649

Round The Horne
Wed,
New Alexandra Theatre,
Birmingham, B5 4DS.
Call 0844 871 3011

That'll Be The Day
Thu, £23.50
Oakengates Theatre, Telford,
TF2 6EP.
Call 01952 382382

Paula O'Brien Live in Wrexham
Thu,
The Ramada Plaza Wrexham,
LL13 7YH.
Call 01978 291400

COMEDY

Lucy Porter 'Consequences' tour
Tonight,
The Old Rep Theatre,
Birmingham, B5 4DY.
Call 0121 359 9444

Standup comedy – Garr Murran, Javier Jarquin, Micky Bartlett
Tonight - tomorrow, £15
Jongleurs Comedy Club, Birmingham, B1 2HG.
Call 08700 111 960

Micky Flanagan Warm Up Show
Tomorrow,
Victoria Hall, Hanley,
Stoke-on-Trent, ST1 3AD.
Call 0844 871 7649

What's In A Name?
Tomorrow,
Birmingham Repertory Theatre,
Library of Birmingham,
B1 2EP.
Call 0121 236 4455

MISC. EVENTS

The Birmingham Whisky Club Presents: Craig's List – New Releases
Today,
The Wellington, Birmingham,
B2 5SN.
Call 0121 200 3115

The Birmingham Whisky Club & Rowheath Pavilion Present: Burns' Ceilidh
Tomorrow,
Rowheath Pavilion, Birmingham,
B30 1HH.
Call 0121 458 1711

Baptism of Fire: Wilfred Owen's War in 1917
Tomorrow,
St Chad's Church, Shrewsbury,
SY11 1JX.
Call 01743 365478

Bridge Club
Mon,
Areley Kings Village Hall, Areley Common, Stourport-on-Severn,
DY13 0NB.
Call 07939 318973

ARTS & CULTURE

Spotlight Tour
Today, Sun, Free
Ikon Gallery, Brindleyplace, Birmingham, B1 2HS.
Call 0121 248 0708

Stitch Social
Today,
Creative Coffee Hub, Birmingham, B29 6HJ.
Call 01215 727300

Making Veganism Easy
Today,
Purely Vegan Store, Birmingham,
B14 6EB. Call 0121 443 3211

Short Introductory Talk: Help & Healing on the Spiritual Path through the teaching of Bruno Groening
Tomorrow, Free
The Polish Millenium Centre,
Birmingham, B5 5PH.
Call 0121 643 3577

Decopatch Craft Workshop
Tomorrow,
Creative Coffee Hub,
Birmingham, B29 6HJ.
Call 01215 727300

Check out full listings in **the ticket** in Friday's Express & Star

Oh Boy! Buddy in rock 'n' roll show

ROCK 'n' roll musical Buddy – The Buddy Holly Story tells the enduring tale of the 1950s music icon's meteoric rise to fame and his final legendary performance before his tragic death in a plane crash at the aged on 22.

The show will be presenting a feast of 50s nostalgia at Wolverhampton Grand Theatre from Tuesday to Saturday.

In just 18 months the bespectacled Texas-born singer-songwriter had revolutionised the face of contemporary music, influencing a host of stars from The Beatles to Bruce Springsteen.

The production boasts a multi-talented cast, including Glen Joseph and Alex Fobbester (who alternate the role of Buddy Holly), in a show that presents two hours of music with more than 20 of Buddy's greatest hits, including That'll Be The Day, Peggy Sue, Oh Boy and Rave On.

Concert

The show recreates the final concert, held at the Surf Ballroom in Clear Lake, Iowa, which also featured Buddy's ill-fated tour mates The Big Bopper, of Chantilly Lace fame, and Ritchie 'La Bamba' Valens.

The show has inspired a generation of multi-million selling jukebox musicals, and has been seen by more than 22 million music fans since it opened in London's West End in 1989.

It has also been endorsed by Buddy's widow, Maria Elena Holly, who said of the show: "We never imagined Buddy's music and story would still be rocking stages and entertaining audiences around the world week-in week-out. I believe this is testament to a great show – the first of its kind – and to the enduring appeal of Buddy Holly and what he represents: youthful energy, huge talent and creativity, combined with a determination to make a lasting impression in this world."

Tickets are now on sale by calling 01902 429212, online at grandtheatre.co.uk or by visiting the box office at the Lichfield Street venue in person.

The cast of Buddy – The Buddy Holly Story will be rocking the Grand Theatre

Blues star's homecoming

JOANNE Shaw Taylor is the Black Country's own queen of the blues, who relocated to the US to forge her career and is at long last recognised in her homeland – judging by the sold out notices for her homecoming gig at Birmingham Town Hall on Saturday.

Last year the 30-year-old singer and guitarist from Wednesbury released her sixth album, Wild, which was recorded in Nashville's Grand Victor Sound Studios with top producer Kevin Shirley, who has also worked with Led Zeppelin, Journey, Iron Maiden, Black Stone Cherry and supergroup Black Country Communion.

"Recording at Grand Victor was incredibly inspiring," said Joanne."It is quite the legendary studio. Dolly Parton cut Jolene and I Will Always Love You here. And Chet Atkins worked here. Basically, if there was a hit record out of Nashville, it was made here. I am very proud of this album, and I can't wait for everyone to hear it."

That album caught the ear of bosses at Jools Holland's Later TV music show, who gave the blues star a slot on the show in October.

She was still a schoolgirl with an obsession for the music in her dad's record collection – such as Jimi Hendrix and Stevie Ray Vaughan – when former Eurythmics star and producer Dave Stewart spotted her considerable musical potential and she went on to release debut album White Sugar in 2009.

Joanne played lead guitar in Annie Lennox's band at the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Concert outside Buckingham Palace in 2012 and her blues work has gained such celebrity fans as Stevie Wonder and top guitarist Joe Bonamassa.

From Russia, and China, with love

CLASSICAL music enthusiasts can mark Chinese New Year with an East meets West concert at the Elgar Concert Hall at the University of Birmingham tomorrow (Friday) with pianist Di Xiao, cellist Jiaxin Lloyd Webber and harpist Eleanor Turner.

Other highlights are at Symphony Hall. On Sunday afternoon (also February 2 afternoon) CBSO perform Beethoven's Fifth, conducted by Mirga Grazinyte-Tyla, plus Mozart's final concerto, with pianist Francesco Piemontesi. On Wednesday night Vasily Petrenko conducts Russian greats for Royal Liverpool Philharmonic with pianist Daniil Trifonov.

Name drop in to ruin a dinner party

THE choice of the name 'Adolf' for a baby is revealed at a dinner party, leading to a furious row in ferocious farce What's In A Name?, which gets its UK premiere at Birmingham Rep tomorrow (Friday) at the start of a two-week run.

Based on the French stage and film sensation Le Prenom, by Matthieu Delaporte and Alexandre de La Patelliere, the dark comedy has been adapted and directed by Jeremy Sams. The cast includes Sarah Hadland, best known as Miranda Hart's TV sidekick Stevie, and former EastEnders actor Nigel Harman. See birmingham-rep.co.uk or call 0121 236 4455.

Fans grateful for day of the Dead

IT'S the day of the Dead at Bilston's Robin 2 venue in Bilston on Wednesday when the 50th anniversary of Live/Dead, by legendary San Francisco hippy group The Grateful Dead. It is performed by a veteran band featuring former Grateful Dead pianist Tom Constanten with Jefferson Starship alumni.

Moving from the Bay to Birkenhead, those wry post-punk indie satirists Half Man Half Biscuit visit the Robin on Thursday, February 2. Before that, the Robin hosts classic rock with Atomic Rooster and Snafu on Friday, The Quireboys (unplugged) on Sunday and New York's Tyketto on Monday.

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You can also visit the website www.thearenastourbridge.co.uk

Full support is on offer to make sure your special night runs smoothly and you can even hire our resident DJ's as well.

Stourbridge Chronicle Thursday, January 26, 2017

CHOICE

Gary Barlow

Let It Shine (BBC1, 7pm)
Graham Norton and Mel Giedroyc are on hand to present the final round of auditions, as more would-be pop princes submit their vocal skills for approval by judges Gary Barlow, Dannii Minogue, Martin Kemp and departing panel member Amber Riley. As with the previous three rounds, each of the singers needs to secure at least 15 stars from the four assembled judges, each of whom will be rating the performances out of five stars. Should they prove successful, the auditionees progress to the next stage of the contest, in which their dance skills will be put to the test in collaborations with some of Britain's most popular musical acts.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Live. **11.30** The Best Dishes Ever. (R) **12.00** Football Focus. **1.00** BBC News; Weather. **1.15** Tennis: Australian Open Highlights. **2.30** Live Bowls: World Indoor Championships. The men's singles semi-finals. **4.30** Final Score. **5.10** BBC News. **5.20** Regional Programme. **5.30** Who Dares Wins.

6.10 Pointless Celebrities. Diane Louise Jordan, the Rev Richard Coles, Nancy Dell'Olio, Matt Barbet, Sharron Davies, Mark Foster, Gyles Brandreth and Susan Calman all take part in the unorthodox quiz show.

7.00 Let It Shine. The final round of auditions arrives, along with Amber Riley's last appearance as a judge, as one last set of would-be pop princes display their vocal abilities for the panel.

8.25 Casualty. Alicia is surprised to discover her long-estranged parents Howard and Jackie are planning to give their marriage another go. However, when old family friend Martin turns up at their surprise anniversary party, and seems to have a falling-out with Howard, it soon becomes clear there is a secret third wheel in their relationship. Meanwhile, Charlie balances his over-zealous wedding-planning with caring for a reluctant teenage football star, and Cal's trust in Alicia is tested when he discovers she has a secret phone hidden in her locker.

9.15 Taboo. As both the Crown and London turn against him, James Delaney enlists the depraved chemist Cholmondely into his company, and Lorna aims to prove she is anything but a weak link.

10.10 BBC News; Weather.; National Lottery Update.

10.30 MOTD: FA Cup Highlights. Gabby Logan presents highlights of the latest FA Cup fourth-round matches, which included Tottenham Hotspur v Wycombe Wanderers, and Middlesbrough v Accrington Stanley.

11.55 The NFL Show. Mark Chapman looks at the major stories shaping the NFL world, joined by former Super Bowl winners Osi Umenyiora and Jason Bell.

12.25 Film: A Few Best Men. (2011) Comedy, starring Xavier Samuel. **1.55** Weather for the Week Ahead. **2.00** BBC News.

BBC2

6.35 Film: Adventure in Baltimore. (1949) Period comedy, starring Shirley Temple. **8.05 Film:** Little Women. (1949) Oscar-winning drama, starring June Allyson. **10.00** Secret Britain. (R) **11.00** Homes Under the Hammer. (R) **12.00** Exploring China: A Culinary Adventure. (R) **1.00 Film:** Kismet. (1955) Musical fantasy, starring Howard Keel. **2.50** Flog It! (R) **3.25** The World's Most Extraordinary Homes. (R) **4.25** Mastermind. (R) **4.55** University Challenge. (R) **5.25** Only Connect. (R) **5.55 Film:** Finding Neverland. (2004) Fact-based period drama, starring Johnny Depp.

7.30 Britain's Ancient Capital: Secrets of Orkney. Andy Torbet dives below the waves in search of the inspiration for the first stone circle, while Chris Packham and Neil Oliver spend the night on an abandoned island as they hunt for clues as to why cultures change. Meanwhile, Shini Somara tests the technology behind a bronze age sauna and the archaeologists uncover a remarkable find. Last in the series. (R)

8.30 Dad's Army. Mainwaring and his platoon have their hands full with two German prisoners and the arrival of a suspicious Polish captain, while Walker sees a way to make easy money. Comedy first broadcast in 1968, starring Arthur Lowe and John Le Mesurier. (R)

9.00 Francis Bacon: A Brush with Violence. Documentary exploring just how much of Francis Bacon's notoriety as a rude, drunken loudmouth was a carefully curated front he maintained to protect the complex and haunted man behind his own myth. Making use of interviews with celebrity commentators, fellow artists, and some of the people who knew him best, this programme sets out to deconstruct the perceived and hidden identities of the man known as one of the most sought-after British artists of the 20th century.

10.20 Film: The Sapphires. (2012) Four Aboriginal Australian singers are propelled to stardom when they entertain American troops in the Vietnam War. Drama, starring Deborah Mailman and Chris O'Dowd.

12.00 Bowls: World Indoor Championships. **1.00 Film:** Love Is the Devil. (1998) **2.25** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. **6.10** Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. (R) **6.25** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.45** Sooty. (R) **6.55** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **7.00** Super 4. (R) **7.15** Oddbods. (R) **7.20** Oddbods. (R) **7.30** Scrambled!: Scrambled! **7.35** Scrambled!: Mr Bean: The Animated Series. (R) **7.50** Scrambled!: Horrid Henry. (R) **8.10** Scrambled!: Teen Titans Go! (R) **8.30** Scrambled!: Bear Grylls Survival School. **9.05** Scrambled!: Adventure Time. (R) **9.25** ITV News. **9.30** Rebound. (R) **10.25** Guess This House. (R) **11.25** Judge Rinder. (R) **12.25** ITV News; Weather. **12.35** River Monsters. (R) **1.05** Big Star's Little Star. (R) **2.05** Tipping Point. (R) **3.05** The Chase. (R) **4.05** Dance Dance Dance. (R) **5.35** Regional Programme ; Weather.**5.45** ITV News; Weather.

6.00 You've Been Framed! King Size! Harry Hill showcases some of the biggest disasters captured in video form by viewers at home.

7.00 Ninja Warrior UK. Competitors from across the UK test their strength, speed and courage in this obstacle-course challenge, hosted by Ben Shephard, Rochelle Humes and Chris Kamara.

8.00 The Voice UK. Celebrity "coaches" Will.i.am, Tom Jones, Jennifer Hudson and Gavin Rossdale preside over the fourth instalment of the Blind Auditions phase of the singing contest. As ever, the celebrity panel must decide whether to lend their support to each act with their backs turned to the performer, allowing only the contestants' voice to play a part in the selection process. However, as places on each coach's team begin to fill up, competition for the remaining spots in the next round will be more fierce than ever.

9.30 Through the Keyhole. Comedian and game-show host Paddy McGuinness, and presenters Caroline Flack and Dave Berry join Keith Lemon to guess: "who habitates in a house like this?".

10.30 ITV News; Weather.

10.45 Film: Cliffhanger. (1993) A retired mountain rescue expert is drawn into a battle of wits with a criminal searching for a lost fortune in the Rockies. Thriller, starring Sylvester Stallone and John Lithgow.

12.45 Jackpot247. **3.00** Who's Doing the Dishes? (R) **3.50** ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

6.20 The King of Queens. (R) **6.45** The King of Queens. (R) **7.10** The King of Queens. (R) **7.35** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.00** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.25** Frasier. (R) **8.55** Frasier. (R) **9.25** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **9.55** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **10.20** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **10.50** The Simpsons. (R) **11.20** The Simpsons. (R) **11.50** Jamie and Jimmy's Friday Night Feast. (R) **12.50** Come Dine with Me. (R) **1.25** Come Dine with Me. (R) **1.55** Come Dine with Me. (R) **2.25** Come Dine with Me. (R) **2.55** Come Dine with Me. (R) **3.25** A Place in the Sun: Summer Sun. (R) **4.30** Location, Location, Location. (R) **5.35** Grand Designs. (R)

6.30 Channel 4 News.

7.00 Penelope Keith's Hidden Villages. Penelope Keith seeks out remarkable communities in Argyll and Bute, where she learns about the local Viking saga in Mull, and explores how the Crinan Canal created one of Scotland's most beautiful short cuts. The presenter also visits Mount Stuart House on the Isle of Bute, watches a game of shinty in Tighnabruaich, and visits the island of Easdale; a place without roads and cars. (R)

8.00 Great Canal Journeys. Timothy West and Prunella Scales explore a network that is completely new to them as they embark on a voyage across the Netherlands. Their journey takes them to the gardens of Keukenhof and the Teylers Museum in Haarlem, before they arrive in Amsterdam, where they tour the capital's canal district – the Grachtengordel. (R)

9.00 Film: The Monuments Men. (2014) Premiere. Seven experts in fine art are assembled into a military platoon during the Second World War, and given an unusual mission. They are sent into occupied Europe to recover priceless works of art that have fallen into Nazi hands and ensure the masterpieces survive the conflict. Fact-based drama, directed by and starring George Clooney. With Matt Damon, Bill Murray and Cate Blanchett.

11.20 Film: Haywire. (2011) A mercenary working for the US government is betrayed by one of her employers and goes in search of revenge. Action thriller, with Gina Carano.

1.05 The Last Leg. (R) **2.00** Hollyoaks. **4.00** Hoarder SOS. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **9.55** The Fairly OddParents. (R) **10.30** The Hotel Inspector. (R) **11.25 Film:** Gold. (1974) **1.50** Big Bash Cricket Final: Highlights. Action from the final. **3.20** The Yorkshire Vet. (R) **4.20** The Yorkshire Vet. (R) **5.20** The Yorkshire Vet. (R)

6.15 Nightmare Tenants, Slum Landlords. A tenant who turned out to be a confidence trickster and a letting agent who locked a couple out of their own buy-to-let investment property. (R)

7.05 NCIS: Los Angeles. The team investigates when a dishonourably discharged marine is accused of beating a Japanese tourist to death, having already been linked with the rape of a businessman's daughter. He claims that he is in love with the girl he is alleged to have raped, and that the accusations being thrown in his direction are a fabrication initiated by her father.

8.00 NCIS. A young Navy Seaman is found dead, with his eyes gouged out, after being involved in a car accident. Director Vance makes a rare return to field duty, pairing up with Gibbs to investigate when it becomes clear the killing seems to be connected to the case of Kip Klugman, a former NCIS agent he once locked up for stealing evidence.

8.55 5 News Weekend.

9.00 Football on 5: The Championship. George Riley and Lynsey Hipgrave introduce action from the latest fixtures, which included Aston Villa v Bristol City, Norwich City v Birmingham City, and Reading v Cardiff City.

9.30 Football on 5: Goal Rush. George Riley and Lynsey Hipgrave introduce all the goals from the latest matches in Leagues One and Two, including Bristol Rovers v Swindon Town, and Yeovil Town v Doncaster Rovers.

10.00 Celebrity Big Brother. Highlights of the housemates' past 24 hours under the all-seeing eye of Big Brother, as they cope with living alongside one another.

11.05 Body Freaks: Old Face, New Face. Documentary following people who have had extreme cosmetic transformations. (R)

12.00 SuperCasino. **3.10** Celebrity Big Brother. (R) **4.00** Celebrity Botched Up Bodies. (R) **4.50** Divine Designs. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four
7.00 Crossing England in a Punt: River of Dreams **8.00** Treasures of the Indus **9.00** Lost Kingdoms of Central America **10.00** The Young Montalbano **11.55** Top of the Pops: 1983 **12.35** Otis Redding: Soul Ambassador **1.40** Classic Soul at the BBC **2.40** Sings Motown **3.40** Close

ITV2
11.00 Ninja Warrior UK **12.00** Take Me Out Celebrity Special **1.00** You've Been Framed! Gold **2.05 Film:** Step Up 2: The Streets (2008) **3.05** FYI Daily **3.10 Film:** Step Up 2: The Streets (2008) **4.05 Film:** Looney Tunes: Back in Action (2003) **5.05** FYI Daily **5.10 Film:** Looney Tunes: Back in Action (2003) **5.50 Film:** Nanny McPhee and the Big Bang (2010) **6.50** FYI Daily **6.55 Film:** Nanny McPhee and the Big Bang (2010) **8.00 Film:** The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug (2013) **9.00** FYI Daily **9.05 Film:** The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug (2013) **11.10** Family Guy **12.40** American Dad! **1.35** The Cleveland Show **2.00** Dads **2.25** Safeword **3.00** Teleshopping

ITV3
2.00 Agatha Christie's Marple **4.00** Midsomer Murders **8.00** Doc Martin **9.00** Midsomer Murders **11.00** Lewis **1.05** Blue Murder **2.00** ITV3 Nightscreen **2.30** Teleshopping

ITV4
11.00 Film: The Man from the Alamo (1953) **12.05** FYI Daily **12.10 Film:** The Man from the Alamo (1953) **12.45** Storage Wars **1.15** ITV Racing Live from Cheltenham and Doncaster. Coverage of today's race meetings at Cheltenham and Doncaster. **4.30 Film:** Lawman (1971) **5.30** FYI Daily **5.35 Film:** Lawman (1971) **6.30** Pawn Stars **7.00** Darts: The Masters Live. Coverage of day two from Milton Keynes. **11.00 Film:** Resident Evil (2002) **12.00** FYI Daily **12.05 Film:** Resident Evil (2002) **1.05** River Monsters **2.05** Storage Wars **2.30** Sporting Funnies **2.40** ITV4 Nightscreen

E4
12.00 Brooklyn Nine-Nine **1.00 Film:** School of Rock (2003) **3.15** Rude(ish) Tube Shorts **3.30** The Big Bang Theory **9.00 Film:** X-Men: First Class (2011) **11.35** Gogglebox **1.15** First Dates **2.25** Virtually Famous **3.05** Chewing Gum **3.30** Revenge **4.55** The Goldbergs

Film4
1.00 The Poseidon Adventure (1972) **3.20** The House of Magic (2013) **5.05** Clueless (1995) **6.55** Millions (2004) **8.50** Loving Interview Special **9.00** Slumdog Millionaire (2008) **11.25** Yakuza Apocalypse (2015) **1.40** R100 (2013)

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CHOICE

Emily Watson

Apple Tree Yard (BBC1, 9pm)
Yvonne shuts down in the aftermath of the attack, unable to report the crime to the police or open up to her husband. Things only get worse when her attacker begins stalking her, progressing from e-mails to following her. Terrified, she turns to Costley for support. He arranges a meeting at a safe house and she becomes tempted to enlist his help in getting revenge. Gary makes a startling admission on the morning that Yvonne prepares to accompany Costley as he seeks out her attacker – which leads her into an even worse situation.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **7.35** MOTD: FA Cup Highlights. (R) **9.00** The Andrew Marr Show. **10.00** The Big Questions. **11.00** Regional Programme. **11.50** Match of the Day Live: The FA Cup. **2.00** BBC News; Weather. **2.15** Bargain Hunt. (R) **3.00** Songs of Praise. **3.35** Match of the Day Live: The FA Cup. Manchester United v Wigan Athletic (Kick-off 4.00pm).

6.05 BBC News.

6.20 Regional Programme.

6.30 Countryfile. Matt Baker and Ellie Harrison present the show from the Peak District. Matt investigates a project to protect the area's moorland, while Ellie meets a photographer and a mountaineer working together on an unusual collaboration. Edith Bowman explores the East Neuk of Fife, Tom Heap reports on broadband access in rural areas, and Adam Henson completes his journey across New Zealand.

7.30 Still Open All Hours. A mysterious woman comes looking for Eric, and Kath is not convinced by his claims to have no idea who she is. Granville tries to promote the medicinal qualities of turnips.

8.00 Call the Midwife. Sister Ursula insists the midwives do not become emotionally involved with their patients, but her harsh new approach proves hard to cope with in the face of two devastating cases. A father-to-be is badly injured in an explosion, leaving him unable to work to support his family, and a couple with dwarfism expecting their first child are warned that their child may be stillborn.

9.00 Apple Tree Yard. Yvonne is stalked by her attacker and is unable to talk to either her husband or the police. She turns to Costley for support, only to find herself plunged into a greater nightmare.

10.00 BBC News.

10.20 Regional Programme.

10.30 MOTD: FA Cup Highlights. The latest matches in the FA Cup fourth round, which included Millwall v Watford, Fulham v Hull City, and Manchester United v Wigan Athletic.

11.20 The Boy Who Tried to Kill Trump.

12.05 The Celebrity Apprentice USA. **1.30** Weather for the Week Ahead. **1.35** BBC News.

BBC2

6.15 Coast. (R) **7.15** A to Z of TV Gardening. (R) **8.00** An Island Parish: Anguilla. (R) **8.30** The Edible Garden. (R) **9.00** Countryfile. (R) **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. **11.30** Nigel Slater's Dish of the Day. (R) **12.00** Figure Skating: European Championships. **1.00** Tennis: Australian Open Highlights. **2.30** Live Bowls: World Indoor Championships. The men's singles final. **5.15** Yellowstone: The Blazing Summer. (R)

6.15 Ski Sunday. Including action from the World Cup night slalom in Schladming, Austria, and the women's downhill event staged in Cortina, Italy.

7.00 City in the Sky. Dallas Campbell and Dr Hannah Fry examine the advanced technology needed to ensure the safety of the one million people estimated to be travelling by plane at any given time. They discover the daily routines of air traffic controllers in the busiest airspace in the world and pilots flying thousands of miles at night. Plus, transporting horses by planes and in-flight medical advice. (R)

8.00 Dragons' Den. The panel assesses the profit-making potential of a range of dolls inspired by history, a new kind of bicycle indicator light, and a honey-infused drink made by beekeepers.

9.00 Special Forces – Ultimate Hell Week. New series. Reggie Yates hosts the military training challenge. The recruits are put through their paces by a former colonel in the South African Special Forces Brigade.

10.00 QI XL. Guests Colin Lane, Sarah Millican and Noel Fielding join regular panellist Alan Davies and host Sandi Toksvig to contemplate the theme "numbers" in this extended episode.

10.45 Live at the Apollo. Sarah Millican presents stand-up comedy from the Hammersmith Apollo, with rising star Tom Allen and US comedian Arj Barker. (R)

11.30 Film: The Cider House Rules. (1999) A doctor's assistant living in the orphanage where he grew up sets out to see more of life, but faces difficult moral decisions. Drama, starring Tobey Maguire and Michael Caine.

1.30 Sign Zone: Question Time. (R) **2.30** Holby City. (R) **3.30** This Is BBC Two. **5.30** Secrets of the Mona Lisa. (R)

ITV

6.00 CITV: Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. **6.10** Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. (R) **6.25** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.45** Sooty. (R) **6.55** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **7.00** Super 4. (R) **7.15** Oddbods. (R) **7.20** Oddbods. (R) **7.30** Scrambled!: Scrambled! **7.35** Scrambled!: Mr Bean: The Animated Series. (R) **7.50** Scrambled!: Ultimate Spider-Man: Web Warriors. **8.20** Scrambled!: Horrid Henry. (R) **8.45** Scrambled!: Teen Titans Go! (R) **9.05** Scrambled!: Adventure Time. (R) **9.25** ITV News. **9.30** Countrywise: Guide to Britain. (R) **10.00** Peston on Sunday. **11.00** Gino's Italian Escape: Hidden Italy. (R) **11.30** Chopping Block. (R) **12.30** ITV News; Weather. **12.35** Judge Rinder. (R) **1.35** Tipping Point. (R) **2.35** Ninja Warrior UK. (R) **3.35** The Voice UK. (R) **5.05** Regional Programme ; Weather.**5.15** ITV News; Weather. **5.30** The Chase: Celebrity Special. (R)

6.30 Dance Dance Dance. Alesha Dixon and Will Best host the dance contest. The celebrity contestants try to replicate routines made famous by Bruno Mars, Beyonce and Justin Bieber to impress judges Ashley Banjo, Tina Landon and Timor Steffens and secure themselves a place in next week's penultimate episode.

8.00 Endeavour. The discovery of a 2000-year-old body provides fresh evidence in a five-year-old unsolved missing persons case, so Morse and Thursday take up the investigation, discovering a possible link to a local pagan ritual to celebrate the harvest. The investigation leads them to a nuclear power station, where they face a conspiracy of silence concerning an experimental new reactor and a potential disaster that could devastate Oxford. Guest starring Sheila Hancock, widow of original Inspector Morse star John Thaw. Last in the series.

10.00 ITV News; Weather.

10.15 Peston on Sunday. (R)

11.15 Anglo-Welsh Cup Highlights. Action from the latest Anglo-Welsh fixtures, including Scarlets v Saracens, Sale Sharks v Cardiff Blues, Ospreys v Bristol and Leicester Tigers v Northampton Saints.

12.15 Jackpot247. **3.00** Chopping Block. (R) **3.50** ITV Nightscreen. **5.05** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R)

CHANNEL 4

6.15 The King of Queens. (R) **6.40** The King of Queens. (R) **7.05** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.30** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.00** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.30** Frasier. (R) **9.00** Frasier. (R) **9.30** Sunday Brunch. **12.30** George Clarke's Amazing Spaces. (R) **1.30** The Simpsons. (R) **1.55** The Simpsons. (R) **2.25 Film:** Epic. (2013) Animated adventure, with the voice of Amanda Seyfried. **4.30** Channel 4 News. **4.55 Film:** Avatar. (2009) Sci-fi adventure, starring Sam Worthington.

8.00 Walking the Americas. The final leg of Levison Wood's journey brings him to Panama, where he ventures through the Darien Gap, one of the world's most dangerous stretches of jungle, to reach Colombia. He also visits the Panama Canal, explores an uncharted cave that is home to vampire bats, and spends some time with an indigenous tribe living deep in the jungle. Last in the series.

9.00 Homeland. Carrie and Reda battle for their client, Quinn fights against his new life, and Saul and Dar suspect Keane has a secret. Claire Danes and Rupert Friend star.

10.00 8 Out of 10 Cats Does Countdown. Jimmy Carr hosts the words-and-numbers quiz, as Jon Richardson and David O'Doherty take on Johnny Vegas and Jamie Laing. Holly Walsh helps out in Dictionary Corner. (R)

11.00 Film: Sleepy Hollow. (1999) A sceptical 18th-century detective takes on a headless horseman who decapitates his victims. Tim Burton's gothic horror, with Johnny Depp, Christina Ricci and Miranda Richardson.

1.00 How to Lose Weight Well. Dr Xand van Tulleken and dietician Hala El-Shafie help a student to slim down for her graduation day, and a groom also attempts to lose weight. (R) **1.55** Heston's Great British Food. A twist on the classic British afternoon tea, featuring a cake stand made out of sponge, a Darjeeling and hedgerow brew and an edible sandwich casino. (R) **2.50** The Autistic Gardener. Award-winning designer Alan Gardner and his team of fellow autistic horticultural enthusiasts radically update a couple's neglected plot in north east London. (R) **3.40** Win It Cook It. Two more teams of contestants answer questions to win a selection of today's mixed bag of ingredients. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake!: Milkshake! Monkey. **6.05** Milkshake! Bop Box. (R) **6.10** Peppa Pig. (R) **6.15** Angelina Ballerina. (R) **6.30** Bob the Builder. (R) **6.40** Wanda and the Alien. (R) **6.50** Zack and Quack. (R) **7.00** Seaside Antics. (R) **7.10** Fireman Sam. (R) **7.20** Pip Ahoy! (R) **7.35** Little Princess. (R) **7.45** Paw Patrol. (R) **7.55** Blaze and the Monster Machines. (R) **8.25** Noddy in Toyland. (R) **8.40** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **8.55** Shimmer and Shine. (R) **9.25** Peppa Pig. (R) **9.35** Peppa Pig. (R) **9.45** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **9.55** The Fairly OddParents. (R) **10.30** Football on 5: Goal Rush. (R) **11.00** Football on 5: The Championship. (R) **11.30** Police Interceptors Unleashed. (R) **12.00** Dads Make You Laugh Out Loud. (R) **1.00** Toddlers Make You Laugh Out Loud 2. (R) **2.00 Film:** The First Wives Club. (1996) Revenge comedy, starring Goldie Hawn, Bette Midler and Diane Keaton. **4.00 Film:** Miss Congeniality. (2000) Comedy, starring Sandra Bullock.

6.10 Film: Leap Year. (2010) A woman plans to take advantage of an Irish tradition to propose to her boyfriend while on holiday in Dublin. When they become separated, she faces a disastrous journey across the country in the company of a charming local innkeeper, and is tempted to leave her boyfriend for her travelling companion. Romantic comedy, starring Amy Adams, Matthew Goode and Adam Scott.

8.00 Cats Make You Laugh Out Loud 4. Iain Lee narrates a compilation of internet videos featuring cats doing bizarre and humorous things. With contributions from Andi Osho, Felicity Ward and Scott Capurro.

8.55 5 News Weekend.

9.00 Celebrity Big Brother. The remaining housemates embark on their final week, knowing only one of them can be crowned Celebrity Big Brother winner on Friday night.

10.00 Film: Life As We Know It. (2010) Premiere. Two people who do not get on are forced to live together when they are named guardians of their dead friends' baby daughter. Comedy, starring Katherine Heigl. Includes 5 News Update at 11pm.

12.15 Film: Going the Distance. (2010) **2.00** SuperCasino. **3.10 Film:** Saw: The Final Chapter. (2010) **4.40** Access. **4.50** House Doctor. (R) **5.40** Angels of Jarm. (R) **5.50** Roary the Racing Car. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four
7.00 David Starkey's Music & Monarchy **8.00** British History's Biggest Fibs with Lucy Worsley **9.00** Rich Hall's You Can Go to Hell, I'm Going to Texas **10.30 Film:** Under the Rainbow (2013) **12.15** Lost Kingdoms of Central America **1.15** Sound of Musicals with Neil Brand **2.15** Bollywood and Beyond: A Century of Indian Cinema **3.45** Close

ITV2
11.30 The Voice UK **1.00** 2Awesome **1.05** 2Awesome: Guidance **1.40** 2Awesome: Side Effects **2.20** 2Awesome: Third Wheel **2.40** 2Awesome: LA Story **3.00 Film:** Inspector Gadget (1999) **4.00** FYI Daily **4.05 Film:** Inspector Gadget (1999) **4.35 Film:** The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring (2001) **5.35** FYI Daily **5.40 Film:** The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring (2001) **8.00 Film:** Skyfall (2012) **9.00** FYI Daily **9.05 Film:** Skyfall (2012) **10.45** Family Guy **12.45** American Dad! **1.45** The Cleveland Show **2.10** The Hot Desk: Louisa Johnson **2.20** Teleshopping **5.50** ITV2 Nightscreen

ITV3
12.50 Wycliffe **1.55 Film:** Columbo: Agenda for Murder (1990) **4.00** Agatha Christie's Marple **6.00** Midsomer Murders **8.00** This Time Next Year **9.00** Tonight at the London Palladium **10.00** Birds of a Feather **10.30 Film:** Changeling (2008) **11.35** FYI Daily **11.40 Film:** Changeling (2008) **1.20** A Touch of Frost **3.10** May the Best House Win **4.55** On the Buses **5.45** ITV3 Nightscreen

ITV4
12.45 Darts: The Masters Live. **5.00** The Darts Show **5.55** Mr Bean **7.00** Darts: The Masters Live. The semi-finals and final from Milton Keynes. **11.00 Film:** Barb Wire (1996) **12.00** FYI Daily **12.05 Film:** Barb Wire (1996) **1.05** River Monsters **2.05** Hell on Wheels **2.55** ITV4 Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping

E4
3.00 The Big Bang Theory: Superheroes **7.00 Film:** X-Men (2000) **9.00** Marvel's Agents of SHIELD **10.00 Film:** Ghost Rider: Spirit of Vengeance (2011) **11.50** Britain's Favourite Superhero **1.30** Tattoo Fixers **2.30** Marvel's Agents of SHIELD **3.15** Rude(ish) Tube **3.35** Hollyoaks

Film4
1.00 The Love Bug (1968) **3.10** The Borrowers (1997) **4.50** Sunshine on Leith (2013) **6.50** The River Wild (1994) **9.00** Now You See Me (2013) **11.15** Spring Breakers (2012) **1.05** The Kingdom of Dreams and Madness (2013) **3.30** Close

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FILM CHOICES

MONDAY
Hidden Truth: Lies Will Surface, Channel 5, 3.15pm
A young woman is forced to prove her brother's innocence after a teenage girl is found murdered in a California town. But she discovers a disturbing dark side to the community, and the hidden identity of the killer. Thriller, starring Shawn Christian. (2016)

TUESDAY
Fatal Memories, Channel 5, 3.15pm
Successful lawyer Sutton is confronted by a horrific scene when she returns to her family home to find her mother has been brutally stabbed to death, and her troubled younger sister April standing over the body with a bloodied knife. Despite the overwhelming evidence against her sibling, Sutton is convinced April is innocent, and sets out prove it. Mystery thriller, starring Italia Ricci and Magda Apanowicz. (2015)

WEDNESDAY
Nightmare from the Past, Channel 5, 3.15pm
Two decades after four high school students accidentally killed a mansion's owner, a mother faces a ghost from her youth in the form of the obsessed ex-con who paid the price for the friends' crimes. Thriller, starring Ashley Scott. (2015)

The Guardian, Friday, BBC1, 11.55pm

THURSDAY
Garage Sale Mystery 7: The Art of Murder, Channel 5, 3.15pm
While busy preparing for a charity garage sale event, an antique store owner discovers a body in the attic of a nearby home. Using her eye for detail, as well as her experience with antiques and murder, she sets about putting together clues to help catch a killer. Drama, starring Lori Loughlin. (2016)

FRIDAY
The Guardian, BBC1, 11.55pm
A distinguished coastguard is recruited to prepare the next generation of aspiring search and rescue specialists. He meets his match with a talented and troubled rookie – a high-school swimming champion who is determined to inherit the instructor's crown. However, throughout the rigorous training the pair forge a strong friendship and settle the struggle for authority. Drama, with Kevin Costner. (2006)

PICK OF THE WEEK

Coastal journey brings back the memories

The United Kingdom has one of the world's most varied coastal landscapes, from sweeping sands and rugged cliffs, to spits and mudflats. Then there's the wealth of historic fishing villages and colourful seaside towns which attract many visitors every year.

In his latest travelogue, Robson Green explores some of Blighty's most intriguing stretches of coastline and discovers what it is about the shoreline that continues to inspire.

"Throughout my life, I've always felt happiest when near the sea," he explains. "I grew up close to the coast, and I've swam or fished off the shores of more than a 100 different countries. Now I want to explore the very edges of Britain."

The actor and presenter travels to four very different stretches of coastline, and meets people who share his passion for our shores.

In the first episode he's off to a 90-mile stretch of North Devon coast that holds childhood memories for him. His adventure begins at the popular seaside resort of Ilfracombe, a town that attracts thousands of visitors every summer.

"There are parts of North Devon that make you feel like you're stepping back in time," explains Robson. "So I'm hoping this journey will help me understand just how and why our love affair with the coast began."

Our Victorian ancestors' desire to be beside the seaside was so great, they would often go to extraordinary lengths to access the best places to soak up the sun. Privately owned tidal pools, with steep cliffs offered the perfect shelter for bathing, but they could only be accessed by boat, so almost 200 years ago, hundreds of Welsh miners were tasked with carving a network of tunnels through the cliffs, to open the pools up to the public.

Aside from investigating a Victorian invention designed to avoid embarrassing swimwear mishaps while changing, Green also sees how the high tidal ranges and craggy rocks make the perfect habitat for marine life.

Following a night under canvas, the eponymous star takes a boat ride 10-miles southwest of Bideford, to the port of Clovelly. With its cobbled streets and 13th-century harbour, the village evokes the character and atmosphere of a bygone age.

Given its picturesque appeal, there's little wonder it has featured in film versions of Sense and Sensibility and Treasure Island. However, after arriving in this quiet seaside village, Robson is involved in a true life drama and a real rescue mission.

Later, he visits Lundy, a dozen miles off the North Devon coast; it's one of the UK's most unspoiled islands. However, just getting there proves to be a struggle, thanks to the Bristol Channel whose choppy waters leave the star a little green around the gills.

With feet back on terra firma, he's soon suspended precariously over it as he scales the sea cliff on the west side of the island known as the Devil's Slide. At 400-feet in length, it's the largest slab of granite in Europe.

Once a pop star, it seems Robson is now keen on becoming a rock star, but as the show reveals, it's not long before his mind starts playing tricks on him.

Tales from the Coast with Robson Green, Tuesday, ITV, 8pm

BEST OF THE REST

MONDAY
Undercover: Britain's Cheap Clothes - Channel 4 Dispatches
Channel 4, 8pm
The British public have certainly taken internet shopping to their hearts – a few years ago, Black Friday and Cyber Monday were largely unknown concepts in the UK, but this year these pre-Christmas sales days saw us spend almost £6.5billion online. In her continuing investigation into Britain's cheap clothing market, Morland Sanders looks into what the home-delivery economy boom means for the workers in some of the 1,500 warehouses that have sprung up in Britain to service these orders. Secret filming shows the realities of operatives walking miles of floorspace a day to make sure the clothes are dispatched during the busiest time of year and also asks what happens if an employee is unwell, turns up late or doesn't want to work overtime.

TUESDAY
Further Back in Time for Dinner
BBC2, 8pm
The Robshaw family enter the turbulent 1910s and the First World War turns all their lives upside down, putting Rochelle back in the kitchen instead of servant Debbie. Never a natural cook, she struggles to feed the family as supplies start to run out and the war puts an end to their previously carefree lives. However, the decade has its positives too with the freedom of a bike ride and an idyllic picnic, and a visit from celebrity chef John Torode - but even he cannot salvage something tasty from 1918's fish sausages.

WEDNESDAY
DIY SOS: The Big Build
BBC1, 9pm
There was a time when the original DIY SOS was just Nick Knowles and a bunch of mates having a laugh as they raced against the clock to transform peoples' houses, and lives. Then the projects became more serious as it became obvious that viewers in floods of tears equalled good ratings. The Big Build continues to pluck at the heart strings with one of the most moving editions to date. Nick, Laurence Llewelyn-Bowen and the team are in the Worcestershire village of Eckington to help 17-year-old Antonia Payne-Cheney. She has a rare condition called Ehlers-Danlos syndrome that causes her joints to regularly dislocate. And because she can't eat normally, she has to be fed through a tube. The builders need to create a sterile space for medical procedures in her bedroom, a specially adapted wet room and an area where she can socialise with friends and family. Have those hankies on stand-by. You may need them.

Tracey Ullman's Show, Friday, BBC1, 9.30pm

THURSDAY
Parenting for Idiots
Channel 4, 10pm
New series. Light-hearted documentary in which a cast of famous faces reveal the many sides of modern parenting in a succession of magic moments and horror stories, while child-free celebrities experience the realities of looking after a child for the first time. Episode one focuses on the different types of chaos that ensue from having children, with Sally Phillips discussing living with nits, Frankie Boyle revealing how his children embarrass him, and Andrew Flintoff divulging a few truths about the Tooth Fairy. Plus, non-parents Jamie Laing and Mark-Francis Vandelli get a taste of parenthood by looking after a five-month-old baby for the day.

FRIDAY
Celebrity Big Brother: Live Final
Channel 5, 9pm
After four-and-a-half weeks of nominations, tasks, evictions and walkouts, the nail-biting moment has finally arrived for the remaining All Stars and New Stars to hear the public's verdict. Emma Willis whittles them down one by one until this year's winner is known – but not before Marcus Bentley narrates highlights of their last day in the house.

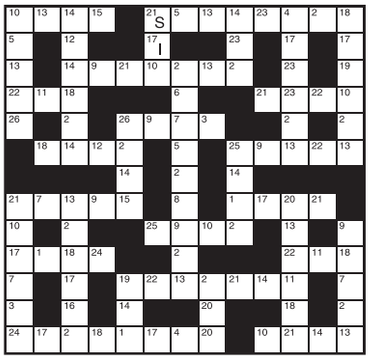
Tracey Ullman's Show
BBC1, 9.30pm
New series. The start of a fresh run of comedy sketches featuring the talented entertainer, who made her name in the UK in the early 1980s before settling for some time in the United States. Delinquent Dame Judi Dench is back, but will being a National Treasure be enough to save her this time? Ambitious politician Nicola Sturgeon has her sights set on more than just Scotland, while there's a heartfelt song from German leader Angela Merkel.

*All prices are subject to VAT

BRAIN GYM No.413

Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



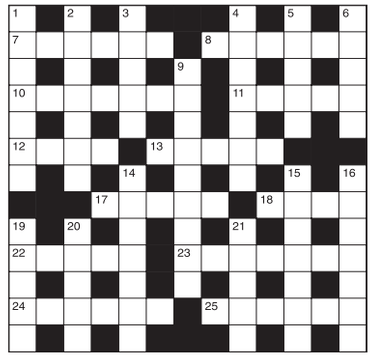
1	14
2	15
3	16
4	17 I
5	18
6	19
7	20
8	21 S
9	22
10	23
11	24
12	25
13	26

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

1 F	2 J	3 O	4 N	5 T	6 W	7 K	8 S	9 Z	10 Y	11 C	12 L	13 E
14 V	15 B	16 P	17 A	18 G	19 D	20 X	21 I	22 Q	23 R	24 U	25 M	26 H

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.



Cryptic Clues:

Across

7. No ride smoothed out (6)
8. Develop half-love after love returned (6)
10. Cruel, as outside the church (7)
11. Knotty points for those voting against - about 500 (5)
12. In addition; I object about alternative indicator (4)
13. Night object (5)
17. External appearance of ropes, say (5)
18. Court dunderhead in the trees (4)
22. It's all right to bring father back to take one animal (5)
23. About to beat, drive back (7)
24. Trance-producing drink (6)
25. Took part in musical game, perhaps (6)

Down

1. Charming, maybe, but won't charm everybody's heart (7)
2. 100 having a sure winner in entertainment (7)
3. Part of 9 is nothing more than a prisoner's room (5)
4. Getting everybody on a level at the end of the day? (7)
5. Go smoothly along with learner in the team (5)
6. Stop 100 getting relief (5)
9. Roar madly about box with instruments in it (9)
14. Make false claim about America being notedly harmonious (7)
15. Simultaneous discharges of missiles on court? (7)
16. A theologian to finish article in appendix (7)
19. Meat in the meeting place (5)
20. When steps are taken by the troops? (5)
21. Fruit to put very quietly in drink (5)

Quick Clues:

Across

7. Fixed (6)
8. Cope (6)
10. Speech (7)
11. Boats (5)
12. Solicitude (4)
13. Niggard (5)
17. Hold up (5)
18. Stockings (4)
22. Commerce (5)
23. Detestable (7)
24. Trust (6)
25. Decisive moment (6)

Down

1. Foretell (7)
2. Affect (7)
3. Lukewarm (5)
4. School bag (7)
5. Heathen (5)
6. Pier (5)
9. Aversion (9)
14. Fault (7)
15. Admit (7)
16. Hermit (7)
19. Adhere (5)
20. Hesitate (5)
21. Tale (5)

Sudoku

7	9				1			
2			7	5		6		
	4			9				3
	6				5		3	4
		3		4		2		
4	8		9		6		7	
		4					2	
	7	8		2	9			1
			4				8	6

Fill in the grid below so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

1	6	8	2	9	7	5	4	3
7	9	4	6	3	5	2	8	1
2	3	5	1	4	8	9	6	7
8	2	7	3	1	9	6	5	4
5	1	6	4	8	2	3	7	9
3	4	9	7	5	6	8	1	2
4	5	3	8	2	1	7	9	6
6	8	1	9	7	3	4	2	5
9	7	2	5	6	4	1	3	8

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS:
CRYPTIC - Across: 1 All up; 4 Lunatic; 8 Conduct; 9 Wooer; 10 Most; 11 Entrance; 13 Dive; 14 Here; 16 Accurate; 17 Open; 20 Image; 21 Remorse; 22 Greatly; 23 Treat.
Down: 1 Accommodating; 2 Lines; 3 Pout; 4 Latent; 5 Newsreel; 6 Trounce; 7 Correspondent; 12 Overheat; 13 Declare; 15 Stormy; 18 Purge; 19 Emit.
QUICK - Across: 1 Repel; 4 Repress; 8 Project; 9 Topic; 10 Ease; 11 Decrease; 13 Deed; 14 Gain; 16 Severity; 17 Maze; 20 Barge; 21 Irksome; 22 Element; 23 Press. Down: 1 Reprehensible; 2 Pious; 3 Lees; 4 Rather; 5 Paternal; 6 Explain; 7 Secretiveness; 12 Reprieve; 13 Divorce; 15 Strict; 18 Alone; 19 Skip.

Thinking space

Quiz

1. Who wrote the Aldwych farces of the 1920s?
2. Of which well-known effect is red shift an example?
3. In which market town did Judge Jeffreys hold the Bloody Assizes of 1685?
4. Which health resort lies between Lakes Brienz and Thun?
5. Which King Harold was killed at the Battle of Hastings?
6. In which art gallery is the Mona Lisa?
7. Which mathematical functions did John Napier discover in 1614?
8. Between which three fruits is the ugli a cross?
9. Which sugar forms five per cent of cow's milk?
10. Who wrote And Quiet Flows The Don?

Last week's solutions:

Quiz: 1 Swiss; 2 US Civil War; 3 James Kelman; 4 The Blue Angel; 5 Menelaus; 6 Manitoba; 7 Four; 8 Sodium; 9 A water bug; 10 French Revolutionary calendar.

Niner: DISPROVEN

Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

26352 gives a blood vessel,
23583489 gives blood vessels,
13247 gives part of the nervous system.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

Stourbridge Chronicle Thursday, January 26, 2017

Photo Finnish – one of the national park lakes in Helsinki surrounded by forest

Hot stuff – Santiago from San Cristobal Hill, Chile

Oh what a sight – the ruins of the ancient city in Paphos Archaeological Park, in Cyprus

King of the jungle – a ring-tailed lemur in Madagascar

Destinations off the beaten track

REMEDY January blues by planning your holidays. Fancy a new experience, here are four overseas locations to top this year's wish-list for far away, and not-so-far-away, destinations.

SANTIAGO, CHILE: Best for long haul

This month, British Airways launch their longest flight, a 14-hour and 40-minute direct route from London Heathrow to Chilean capital, Santiago. (Flights from £680 return if booked in March; www.britishairways.com)

Delve into the life of Nobel Prize-winning poet and political activist Pablo Neruda, the subject of new acclaimed art house film – Neruda – starring Gael Garcia Bernal. Neruda's three eccentric houses have been transformed into museums; two along the coast in Valparaiso and Isla Negra, and one in Santiago's Bellavista district. Visit www.fundacionneruda.org/en for opening times and entry prices.

A 10-minute walk away, across the capital's fast-flowing Mapocho River, lies trendy area Lastarria, home to new boutique hotel Magnolia. Built in 1929, the former family home has been restored to its former Neo-Gothic glory, with an elegant bar and reading library. Rooms from £145 with breakfast, visit hotelmagnolia.cl

FINLAND: Best for short haul

This December, Finland celebrates 100 years of independence from the Russian Republic, with celebrations and new openings happening throughout 2017.

The most exciting project is the designation of new national park Hossa, in eastern Finland's Kainuu region, which will become the outdoor-loving nation's largest protected nature area.

Hike trails, canoe waterways, or seek out Stone Age rock paintings. Overnight in a cabin or embrace the wilderness by camping; bookings can be made at the Hossa Visitor Centre (www.nationalparks.fi/en/hossavisitorcentre).

Although the woodland setting perfectly matches author Tove Jansson's whimsical imagination, you won't bump into any Moomins in Hossa. Instead, head to Tampere, in June, when the newly renovated Moomin Museum opens, showcasing more than 2,000 pieces of memorabilia (muumilaakso.tampere.fi/en). Everyone is invited to the party from August 25-27, when outdoor tables will be laid across the country for Finland's ambitious Let's Eat Together festival (syodaanyhdessa.fi/in-english).

MADAGASCAR: Best for wildlife

Revered for its endemic wildlife, most notably the charismatic lemur, this African island, lapped by the Indian Ocean, is benefiting from improved infrastructure and accommodation options.

Managed by Norman Carr Safaris, the new Miavana resort sits on Nosy Ankao, part of a private five-island archipelago off the north-east tip of the mainland. Dissected by lagoons and fringed with reefs, it's ideally located for observing the island's marine bio-diversity.

Visit between June and November to spot migrating humpback whales. To find out more, see www.timeandtideafrica.com/miavana (the property is due to open early 2017).

A more economical option for exploring Madagascar is G Adventures' new eight-day Baobab & Tsingy Explorer trip, focussing on the central region and its famous spiky rock formations. The trip costs from £999 per person, excluding flights; visit www.gadventures.com

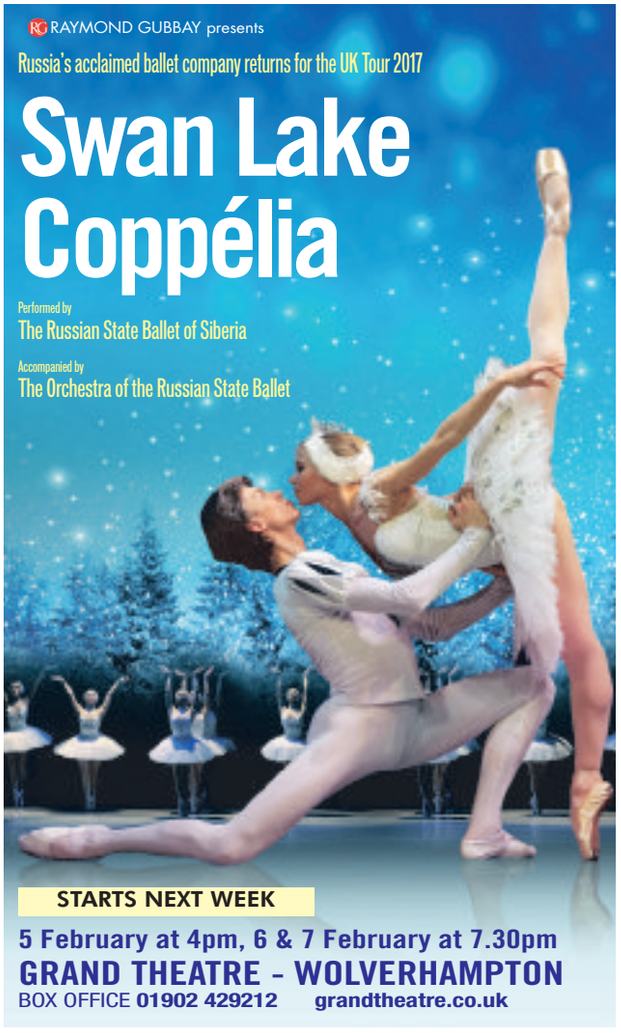
PAPHOS, CYPRUS: Best for culture

Offset hours spent snoozing on a sun-lounger by clocking up cultural pursuits in 2017's balmy European Capital of Culture.

Throughout the year, 300 events will be staged against a backdrop of Hellenistic tombs and Roman fortresses in the birthplace of ancient goddess Aphrodite on the island's south-west coast.

A varied programme will include open-air concerts in the medieval Castle Square, cinema screenings on the beach, dance shows in the street and an art exhibition along the Akamas Peninsula. For more details, visit www.pafos2017.eu

The mosaics of Nea Paphos (Aphrodite's Sacred City) are rated among the most beautiful in the world and have earned Unesco World Heritage status. In October, archaeologist Sharon Walker from the British Museum will be hosting a series of workshops about the mosaics at Paphos' sophisticated beachside Almyra hotel. Rooms cost from £86 per night with breakfast; www.thanoshotels.com



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Stourbridge Chronicle Thursday, January 26, 2017

Couple find perfect home thanks to Kier

Kier Living

One of the first families to move to the new Brownhills housing development have praised their new home.

The Espley-Atkin's moved onto Kier Living's Waterside Place development in November when their house was one of the first to be completed on the site.

Recently married in August, the couple purchased the home to start a fresh new chapter in their lives.

Darren, aged 31, a sales executive who works in Reading, and Maria, 41, a receptionist in Cannock, immediately fell in love with the property upon visiting the development for the very first time.

Extras

"We looked at a number of new build developments in the area, but nothing compared to what Kier Living had to offer," said Darren.

"Our home comes complete with many additional extras such as washer/dryer and fridge freezer for example – items that other builders charge for.

"The development is also ideally located for us with great commuter links making it easier to get to work and has plenty of local amenities. We are especially looking forward to taking our pet Labrador Jazz for many walks alongside the nearby canal.

"The idea of decorating our own blank canvas really excites us and we can't wait to make this house our home."

Darren and Maria purchased a 'Fairbourne' three-storey home for them and their children Brad aged 18 and Caitli, 16.

They particularly liked the split level design of the living space, meaning they could have their own space on the top floor while the children enjoyed the sanctuary of their own bedrooms.

CONTACT US

Kier Living

Tel: 01767 355500

Web: www.kierliving.co.uk

Having previously rented a property, the couple used the Government-backed Help to Buy scheme to make their move happen.

The initiative allows buyers to purchase a property with only a five per cent deposit and helps to fund up to 20 per cent of the purchase price in the form of an equity loan.

Darren added: "One of the many benefits with moving to a new build is that our monthly outgoings will be considerably less.

"For a start our monthly mortgage is more or less half of what we used to pay in rent.

"We'll also benefit from reduced heating bills because of the energy efficient build.

"We are very pleased with the design and quality of the house.

"However, if we need any assistance we are comforted in the knowledge that there is a ten year home warranty and a two year Kier Living customer care programme in place.

"The service we received from Sam the sales advisor was excellent and we had good communication throughout.

"She was quick and responsive and all of the information about Help to Buy was easy to understand.

"It was stress free too as the mortgage adviser dealt with everything on our behalf.

"We can't praise the staff at Kier Living enough and would highly recommend them to anyone looking to buy a brand new home."

Waterside Place is a stunning development of two, three and four-bedroom homes with prices starting from £133,995.

For more information visit www.kierliving.co.uk

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CGI of The Rableigh 3 bedroom home. Elevations and finishes may vary. *Help to Buy is available upon request subject to terms and conditions.

Quality residences from Cameron Homes

Cameron Homes

Cameron Homes, which is amongst the Midlands' most respected building companies, is creating some superb developments at locations throughout the region in 2017.

High quality residences, all carefully designed and finished to an exacting specification, are being provided by the long-established Staffordshire-based building company.

This means that the new year could mean a fresh start in a brand new Cameron home for many people – and by using one of the company's most successful sales incentives, the move can be a hassle-free reality.

Andy Gough, Sales and Marketing Director of Chasetown-based Cameron, explains that the part exchange scheme is a popular way to purchase a new property.

"Part exchange, where we buy a customers' existing home, worked very well in 2016, with many people taking advantage of it, and we expect it to be just as popular in the coming 12 months. As a family-owned company we pride ourselves not only on the high standard of our properties but also on our excellent customer care and we have a range of other ways to help, such as offering financial advice and guidance," he says.

Cameron has several established developments where the part exchange incentive is available. At Keepers Cross, in Tividale, the company is providing a contemporary collection of 54 two, three and four bedroom homes with excellent links to Dudley, West Bromwich, Wolverhampton and Birmingham.

Customers can choose from 14 stylish layouts, many of which offer garages and en suite master bedrooms.

Bourne Fields is Cameron's flagship development, featuring an elegant collection of 14 remarkable five-bedroom residences at an enviable address.

CONTACT US

Cameron Homes
Tel: 01543 671818
Web: cameronhomes.co.uk

With a premium specification and a desirable location between Aldridge and Streetly, Bourne Fields is the epitome of luxury living. All 14 homes feature everything you'd expect from a showcase Cameron collection, including a stunning kitchen, a sumptuous master suite and spectacular open plan living spaces.

Coney Lodge, in Burntwood, is set back from Rugeley Road and is hidden by mature trees. This is a select development of just eight beautifully-designed three and four-bedroom residences. The collection borders acres of countryside, on the edge of Gentleshaw Common.

At Tatenhill, Staffordshire, Oakhurst is a collection of just eight beautifully designed four-bedroom homes, located approximately three miles from Burton upon Trent. These exclusive residences will each feature an integral garage, a spacious master suite and a modern open plan kitchen with bi-fold doors.

Lakeside Apartments, at Barton under Needwood, is a development of 54 two-bedroom apartments offering the highest-standard of specification, security and style. With restaurants, bars and delicatessens on one side and woodland, lakes and towpaths on the other, life at Lakeside Apartments allows you to explore a new side of life every day. The first phase of apartments is anticipated to go on sale early 2017. Cameron's new development in Hill Ridware, a small village near Rugeley, will be called Austen Grange. There will be two phases of properties, with the first going on sale in May, but a total of 48 houses will be provided, including affordable homes. The designs will range from two to five bedroom homes, including detached and semi detached styles. This is set to be one of the company's busiest years and it will be an exciting one too for the many people who move into a new Cameron property.

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To find out how we can help you buy with our tailored purchase packages, visit **cameronhomes.co.uk**

*Available on selected plots.

Tatton Hall Homes proud to be local

Tatton Hall Homes

Tatton Hall Homes Limited is proud to be a local housebuilder with close links to Wolverhampton and other West Midlands regions.

The company offers stylish 2, 3 and 4 bedroom properties with luxury kitchens and bathrooms as well as barn conversions which provide modern and contemporary living in idyllic locations.

The company is well respected and trusted and works in partnership with Wolverhampton City Council. With a wealth of experience in the housebuilding sector, the company traded successfully throughout the last recession in which many small and medium sized developers failed.

The company supports the community in which it operates. They recruit locally, employing staff from Wolverhampton, Wednesfield, Bilston, Sedgley, Ashmore Park and Essington. They use local suppliers and tradespeople and locally sourced materials wherever possible. Ashmore Glass, Carvers, Howdens, M & G Developments, Newpool Construction and Walter Tippers are contributors to their projects.

The company also works closely with Stourbridge College to provide a Modern Apprenticeship placement.

Tatton Hall Homes Limited recently relocated their office to Deansgate, 62-70, Tettenhall Road, Wolverhampton

The Management Team have a thorough knowledge of the areas in which they operate. The importance of purchasing sites within the proximity of good schools is a key feature in the company strategy.

Sites at Broadleaf Gardens, WV3, and Hill Croft Gardens, WV4, are both within easy reach of The Royal School, Wolverhampton. Previously an independent, private school, this is now a state school. The Hill Croft Gardens development, Warstones, was a prize winner in the 2016 'Built in Quality Awards' as a result of a nomination by Wolverhampton City Council. The site has only 2 properties remaining.

CONTACT US

Tatton Hall Homes

Tel: 07496 087045

Web: www.tattonhallhomes.co.uk

The Broadleaf Gardens development, Birches Barn Road, WV3 7BU, is already selling well and Show Homes will be open for viewing in March. Managing Director, Carl Tatton, understands the need for new homes in the area. He is especially keen to promote the Government-backed Help to Buy Scheme advising that the scheme can make a house purchase a reality.

Carl says: "Buying a property can be cheaper than renting. Recent press articles may have given the impression that the Help to Buy Scheme has ended. Only the Mortgage Guarantee element has ceased. The normal Help to Buy Equity Loan remains available at present. With the scheme, only 5% deposit is needed to purchase any of our properties. This is the lowest deposit available. Importantly, the scheme is available to first time buyers as well as those who own a property."

Carl adds: "New homes have much to offer. Improved building regulations and modern materials mean higher building specifications than in older properties and cheaper energy costs. With standard security features, two year appliance warranties, no time consuming maintenance or repairs and 10-year structural warranties a new home is a sensible investment".

To find out more about properties on offer and the benefits and terms and conditions of the Help to Buy Scheme contact the Sales Team on 07496 087045.

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Stourbridge Chronicle Thursday, January 26, 2017

Suzuki's rather surprising package

By Ian Donaldson

SUZUKI IGNIS, FROM £11,499

Should you find yourself at a motor dealers' convention (lucky you), the people with the widest grins might well be selling new Suzukis.

Last year UK new car sales hit a record high overall and so did Suzuki, with more than 38,000 leaving their showrooms.

That's good, but better – much better – is the 59 per cent hike in profits made by the dealers selling them.

Think of that as a pay rise so big you start to dream about holiday homes near a sunny golf course or that round the world cruise you've been promising yourself when things turned better.

And now comes a new Suzuki so on trend with what the car market demands right now that the lucky dealers might already be mentally upgrading their cruise cabins to commodore status.

The Ignis is a small family hatch disguised with hints of beefy off-roader, or what the trade calls a crossover. And car buyers can't get enough of this style at the moment, witnessed by an avalanche of new models.

Building it a bit taller than normal means more room inside, especially in the back, where a six-footer can sit comfortably behind his twin brother. There can't be a more spacious car on the market that fills the modest shadow cast by the Ignis.

As well as presenting as a crossover, the Ignis approaches that other holy grail of current car design – lightness. In its most basic form the car turns a featherweight 810kg on the scales, with predictably good results on the economy front.

All five versions of the Ignis, with prices from £9,999 for the SZ3, use the same 1.2 litre 90 horsepower petrol engine, although a couple are available with a modest boost from a small generator helping the car during acceleration.

The Ignis is very spacious

The extra battery sits under the front passenger seat and this SHVS version (from £12,999) cuts the CO2 figure from 104g/km to 97g/km and hikes the official average fuel consumption from 61.4mpg to 65.7mpg.

You can have a semi-automatic Ignis, with an electric motor working the clutch, for an extra £800 and there's a top version, costing £13,999 and combining the small electric boost with a part-time 4x4 system aimed at the sort of Suzuki owner who lives down a country lane and needs to get to work on a snowy morning.

Every Ignis gets air conditioning, DAB radio with Bluetooth and front electric windows. They won't sell many of those, with likely most popular Ignis the next grade up.

This £11,499 SZ-T adds satellite navigation, rear view camera, alloy wheels, roof rails and plastic wheel arch extensions and LED headlamps. It also has twin rear seats that can slide forward to boost boot room, or back to let the lanky of leg relax.

A new family hatch disguised with hints of beefy off-roader, or what the trade calls crossover

The SZ5 (£12,999) adds dual air conditioning, keyless entry and start and rear electric windows. It is also fitted with camera brake support that spots a vehicle or people in the road ahead and will brake for you if necessary.

This system brings a top five star safety rating in the European tests, without it the Ignis scores a less impressive three stars.

But back to what's likely to attract a buyer to an Ignis in the first place, those looks. For maximum effect you'll need another £465 for metallic paint, or £650 for contrasting metallic black on the roof. Meanly, there is only one no-cost paint finish, a bold red.

The interior is at least as striking as the bodywork outside. It's obviously built down to a cost but attention to detail in matching surfaces and keeping panel gaps tight in these Japanese built machines is pleasingly obvious.

Out on the road in an SZ-T version the lightness of this newcomer translates into a car that feels livelier than you might expect from its unspectacular power output. There's a nimble way it reacts to steering input too, making the Ignis feel keen to please in the manner of an enthusiastic puppy.

Driven with some verve it showed 57mpg on the handsomely readable instrument panel; lifting off a bit had the numbers climbing to 61.7mpg.

That's better than Suzuki showed in the official test – which makes it an event as rare as a television talent show host becoming president of the United States.

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1.4 Limited Edition 3dr Representative example

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Special edition to mark the last 100 current Civic Type R

Black Edition is expected to be a collector's item

Honda has unveiled a Black Edition of the Civic Type R. Commemorating the last of the current Civic Type R to come off the production line, this version is limited to the last 100 cars to come off the production line and Honda is expecting the version to become a true collector's item.

Already on their way to dealers across the country, the Civic Type R Black Edition features a predominantly black interior with red accents which add to the premium cabin feel, whilst the exterior is differentiated from the standard version by red rear wing end plates on the spoiler.

With production of the current Civic Type R at Honda's factory in Swindon now finished, the factory is gearing up for the next generation Civic, which goes on sale in March, and the new Civic Type R version, which is expected to hit retail forecourts in the latter half of this year.

With pricing based on the existing GT model at £32,300 OTR, Honda is expecting the Civic Type R Black Edition to sell out quickly.

Billed as a 'race car for the road', the British built Honda Civic Type R is powered by the most extreme and high-performing Type R engine ever built.

"The direct-injected turbocharged 2.0 litre VTEC TURBO petrol engine delivers outstanding power, torque and performance figures for the front-wheel drive hot hatch segment.

"Peak power output is 310 PS at 6,500 rpm, and peak torque is 400 Nm at 2,500 rpm – both higher than for any previous Honda Civic Type R model.

Phil Webb, head of cars at Honda UK, commented: "There are only going to be 2,500 of the current Civic Type Rs on UK roads, so the car is going to be pretty special as it is – but with the addition of this special limited run of 100 Black Editions to the product line up and owners will have a real collectors piece on their hands."

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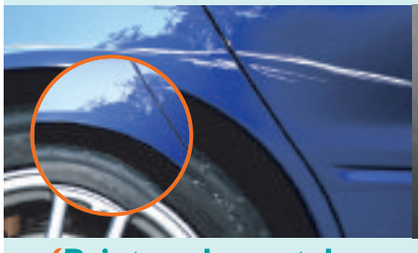

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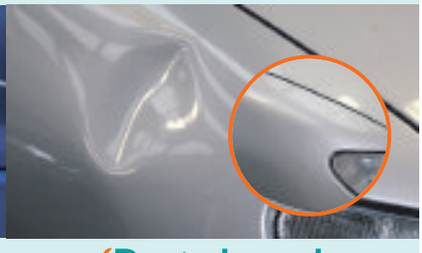

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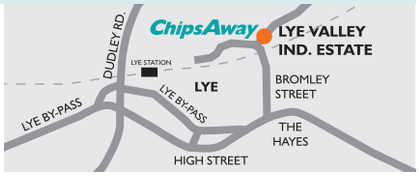

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Finance example: 07/07 Honda Civic 1.8 i-VTEC ES 5dr, Cash Price £4495, Deposit £300, Amount of credit £4195, Fixed interest rate 6.25% Flat rate, 11.8% Apr, 60 monthly Payments of £99.60 (£22.98 per week) Total amount payable £6276.00 (Includes Document fee and Completion fee, Subject to status)

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Stourbridge Chronicle Thursday, January 26, 2017

Get a load of these Volkswagen offers

Volkswagen Retailers have a particularly eye-catching offer: a £3,250 saving on the Golf hatchback.

This offer runs until April 3 and applies to all trim levels of the Golf hatchback including the headline-grabbing high performance Golfs.

This includes the legendary Golf GTI, the rapid Golf GTD and the flagship Golf R with 4MOTION four-wheel drive.

The range begins with the Golf S, which costs from £14,375 with the offer applied. The car includes the composition media system, with a 6.5-inch colour touchscreen and Bluetooth telephone connection. Manual air conditioning includes a dust and pollen filter while an electronic parking brake features an auto-hold feature for hill starts.

Safety is enhanced with electronic stability control and traction control. In the front, driver's and front passenger's airbags are combined with a driver's knee airbag and front seat side impact airbags. And both front and rear passengers have a curtain airbag system.

The Golf Match Edition adds executive-car features including radar-assisted adaptive cruise control (ACC) that takes the strain out of driving in urban traffic and on the motorway. Automatic driving lights add to the inherent safety of the Golf, as do rain-sensing automatic windscreen wipers. Front and rear parking sensors help reduce the likelihood of car park knocks and scrapes.

The Volkswagen Tiguan SUV now has an increased deposit contribution of up to £1,500 at 5.1 per cent APR representative for customers taking advantage of a Volkswagen Financial Services' Solutions Personal Contract Plan. The range kicks off with the Tiguan S, which is well-equipped with features including the Composition Media system with eight-inch colour touchscreen.

All trim levels of the Golf have special offers

The TIguan luxury SUV gets fixed price servicing

Flagship Golf R is included in the current range of offers from Volkswagen

The Tiguan has a maximum five star rating from the Euro NCAP safety programme thanks to its variety of safety features including electronic stability control, traction control and trailer stabilisation function. The Tiguan S, SE and SE Navigation models benefit from a £1,500 deposit contribution while the SEL and R-Line trims have a contribution of £1,250.

The SEL has 19-inch alloy wheels, discover navigation system with European navigation data and a three-year subscription to Car-Net 'Guide and Inform'. This provides online access to a range of information such as traffic, fuel pricing and parking space availability. There is also active info display.

The Tiguan R-Line adds 20-inch 'Suzuka' alloy wheels and sports suspension. Its sporty credentials are bolstered by unique bumpers and special 'R-Line' badging. The interior features aluminium-look inserts in the dash and door panels and a black rooflining.

The Polo now has a £1,400 deposit contribution at 6.2 per cent APR representative for customers taking advantage of a Volkswagen Financial Services' Solutions Personal Contract Plan. And insurance is included at no extra cost.

Also, the Polo range has just been boosted with the new Match Edition, which adds £350 worth of equipment for just £50. Included are heated door mirrors that fold electronically and an auto-dimming rear-view mirror. Auto windscreen wipers plus front and rear parking sensors increase the technology count. The Polo Match Edition starts at £13,315.

The Volkswagen up! is a cheeky city car with a big personality. The Move up! and High up! trims are available with a £500 deposit contribution at 4.6 per cent APR representative. The Move up! starts at £10,025 and the High up!, which adds front fog lights, electrically heated and adjustable door mirrors and a leather trimmed three-spoke multifunction steering wheel, starts at £11,580.

At the other end of the Volkswagen range is the Touareg. This luxury SUV has two engine options. Both power plants are 3.0-litre V6 turbo diesels with eight-speed automatic tiptronic gearboxes. The 262 PS version is available with a £6,000 deposit contribution at 5.9 per cent APR representative, while the 204 PS example is available with a £4,000 deposit contribution. The Touareg is now available with fixed price servicing which includes parts, labour and VAT.

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13 63 ASTRA GTC SRI 1.7CDTI 3DR POWER RED 45,000 MILES		£8,995	
16 16 ASTRA GTC SRI 1.4T 3DR OLYMPIC WHITE 8,000 MILES	£12,695	£12,395	£300
16 16 NEW ASTRA SRI NAV 1.0T 5DR OLYMPIC WHITE 7,500 MILES	£12,995	£12,495	£500
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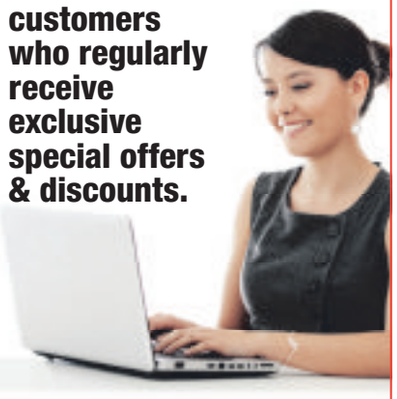

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Please be aware that when purchasing a puppy there are some simple guidelines you can follow to ensure that you are not purchasing from a Puppy Farmer:
1. Try to ensure you visit the puppy whilst it is still with it's Mother.
2. Do not arrange to collect a puppy from any other location than that of the breeder.
3. Ensure that you are given any KC documentation, if pedigree.
Whilst Midland News Association publications take great care to avoid publication of advertisements from Puppy Farmers we cannot accept any liability should readers purchase from this kind of establishment.

EXTRA LARGE guinea pig cage with male Guinea Pig. £20. 07591 117437.

M.A.R.T.
Reg Charity No: 500917
MUNCH black/white neutered Shih-Tzu/Jack Russell Cross, lively little chap, needs an active, mature owner, experienced with dogs. No Children.
SCAMPI neutered, 9 year old Yorkie, very happy little dog, loves fuss and walkies, would suit a mature, active owner. No Children.
SCOOBY black/white, 6 month Lurcher/Greyhound Cross, lovely, friendly dog, good with cats.
All homes visited.
Secure fencing essential.
01902 730899.

ROSEDENE RESCUE CENTRE
1, Radley Road, Rushall, Walsall. WS4 1LN.
01922 627013.
Open Monday to Saturday 11am - 5pm.
Sundays - Bank Holidays 11am - 4pm.
Takes in relinquished dogs from owners, all areas (if they are vet checked/up to date with jabs.)
Donations of dog food, toys, bedding and vet bills always appreciated.

vets

Express & Star

THIS SPACE COULD BE PROMOTING YOUR BUSINESS

Every day our customers get a great response from Classified Advertising.

So could you by calling our friendly experienced Sales Advisors on 01902 319191.

5 Business & Farming

business opportunities

READERS are recommended to take appropriate professional advice before entering any obligations.

6 Property

accommodation to let

NOTICE TO READERS It is an offence under the Accommodation Agencies Act 1953, for an Agency to charge a fee simply for the registration of your requirements and/or supplying particulars of premises to let.

overseas property

NOTICE TO READERS
Readers are advised to seek independent legal advice before entering into any financial commitments.

properties wanted

WE PAY 100% of purchase price EVERY TIME!
BLACK COUNTRY HOMES
Sell your HOUSE - SIMPLE
You agree the price, we buy the house.
• NO AGENTS FEES • COMPLETION TO SUIT YOU
• FREE SOLICITORS • ANY HOUSE, ANY CONDITION
30 yrs
0800 999 999 6
or 01384 226086 24/7 www.black-countryhomes.co.uk

CASH NOW wolverhampton properties
FOR YOUR HOUSE
• Legal Fees Paid • No Fees • Any Condition
• Guaranteed Offer • Repossessions Stopped
We can buy your house in 2 days
0800 389 6788
01902 628047 Lines open 24 hours a day 7 days a week subject to terms

Need to sell your home fast?
We can help you make a fresh start
With solutions to suit ...
you can clear your debts and make a fresh start
Purchase Agreed Within **7 DAYS**
ALL CIRCUMSTANCES CONSIDERED
COMPLETE ON DATE TO SUIT
FREE VALUATION AND LEGALS
FREE FRIENDLY ADVICE
LOCAL COMPANY
MARION | PROPERTY SOLUTIONS
WHY NOT CALL US TODAY
for an informal, friendly and confidential chat?
*Terms and Conditions apply
01384 930 978 OUR LINES ARE OPEN 24/7

BLACK COUNTRY HOMES

CLASSIFIEDS DELIVERS RESULTS
"We have been advertising in the Express & Star and Chronicles for over 20 years and consider it a key part of our business with the regular flow of calls, which our advertising generates."
Black Country Homes
For great business results call
01902 319 191
ClassifiedAds
Brought to you by Express & Star

Home Cash Buyer
Sell today, sign today, complete when u wish
£££ RENT BACK OPTIONS £££
Houses / Land Required
Ring Paul 24/7 Local **07870 341 089**
Sandwell area: Call 0121 696 4154
Walsall & Cannock area: Call 01922 432049
Wolverhampton: Call 01902 489901
www.homecashbuyer.co.uk

7 Jobs

manufacturing

UK'S PREMIER MANUFACTURER
of highest quality bathroom products has the following vacancies:
Assemblers
Solderer/Brazers
Fully Experienced Electroplating
Plant Operators
(possible shiftwork)
Lathe and CNC Machinists
Toolmaker / Product Developer
Metal Polishers
E-mail:-
finance@sterlingham.co.uk
Postal applications and CV's to The Sterlingham Co.Ltd
Units 1A - 4,
Stamford Street, Amblecote,
Stourbridge DY8 4HR

8 Motoring

cars over £1500

BARGAIN
CITROEN C4 1.6SX
08 reg, 45,000 miles, hatchback, 8 months MoT, Grey, 5-dr, auto transmission, excellent condition.
£2,150 ono
07872 328468.

FORD FOCUS 1.6 GHIA
2006, 28,000 miles, light blue, usual extras,
£1,695 ono.
01902 673028

Buy and sell with ClassifiedsAds

1. Visit our ClassifiedAds website
www.classifiedads.expressandstar.co.uk

2. Call our Classified sales team on **01902 317 878**

3. Self Serve - Create your own advert in print and online - visit:
bookanad.expressandstar.co.uk

ClassifiedAds
BUY LOCAL, SELL LOCAL
Brought to you by Express & Star

FIAT GRANDE PUNTO

2007, 1.4 Sport, 73,000 miles, 5 door, abs, electric windows, full MoT, part history, 2 owners,

2 keys.

£1,700.

07538 750391.

FORD C-MAX 2010, 1.8L D 30k miles, black, fsh, parking sensors, excellent car. Well looked after. MOT 7/17.£4,995 07903 530573

HONDA JAZZ

2009, 51,000 miles, blue, MoT, excellent condition, 1 previous owner, service history, new car

forces sale.

£3,300.

07748 304733.

PRESTIGE

MERCEDES SL350 AUTOMATIC CONVERTIBLE

54 reg, 74,000 miles, FSH, Obsidian Black, with cream leather, keyless go, power hood, panoramic glass roof, anti roll bar wind deflector, alloys, sat nav, Xenon lights,

2 keys.

Absolutely pristine.

£9,999.

07836 204450 or 07545 601552.

GOOD RUNNER

MINI ONE

1400cc, 2007, silver.

Black interior.

62,000 miles.

MoT June 2017.

£2,300.

07814 447682.

NISSAN MICRA ACTIVE

58 reg, 80,000 miles, black, automatic, one owner, 12 months MoT, 5 door, alloy wheels, full service history, excellent condition.

£2,500 ono.

01562 746913.

IMMACULATE

SUZUKI SWIFT

66 plate.

Low mileage.

Red with black lines on roof.

Excellent condition.

£10,500.

07951 664184.

EXCELLENT CONDITION

VAUXHALL CORSA

1.2, 08 reg, 60,000 miles, MoT,

£2,750 ono.

07935 030675.

VAUXHALL ZAFIRA CLUB

2006 Model // 7 seats, 50,200 Miles, Silver, ABS, Front Electric Windows, Air Bag, Air Con, MOT, Central Locking, Cruise

Control, Tax, Alloys, Stereo, CD

£2,995

07468 482728

BARGAIN

VW GOLF 2.0 TDi GT

5dr, 2011, immaculate condition, low mileage, 52,800 miles, (cam belt replaced at 51,833 miles), 12 months MoT, FSH, last serviced 16.11.16. Alarm, immobilser, alloy wheels, CD player, PAS, front and back fog lights, front and

rear parking sensors, CL.

£6,950 ono.

07817 073369.

cars under £1500

ADVERTISERS ARE REMINDED

that the Business Advertisements (Disclosure) Order of 1977 requires that advertisements must clearly differentiate between Private

and Trade.

EXCELLENT CONDITION

FIAT PUNTO

2006.

81,000 miles.

12 months MoT.

Very tidy.

Drives brilliant.

£1,100 ono.

07970 174138.

BARGAIN

MAZDA 323 1600CC

5dr hatchback, petrol, 2003 silver, only 74,000 miles, new battery, 2 former keepers, needs a little welding for MoT, excellent runner, clean and tidy inside and out.

Nice looking car worth seeing.

Spares or repairs

£375.

01902 262001 or 07928 679949.

EXCELLENT CONDITION

MGF SOFT TOP

2000 plate.

Very low miles.

Long MoT.

Service History.

Excellent condition.

£895 ono.

07729 692827.

★★★

PEUGEOT 307 1.4

Petrol, 104+ miles, 05, MoT February 2017, four new tyres, very good condition inside and out, lady owner, very good

runner and reliable

£550 o.n.o.

07515 770277.

ROVER 211

2000, 26,000 miles, red, air bag, fsh, alarm, long MoT, tax, Stereo, 2 owners from new.

£750 ono.

01384 355969.

MUST BE SEEN

ROVER 75 2.0 DIESEL

2002, 11 months MoT, 2 owners from new with fsh, low guaranteed mileage for year, 18in MG alloys with four new tyres plus four original Rover alloys with good tyres, very nice and well looked after vehicle, regrettable sale due to unexpected Christmas present.

£1,450.

07773 354042.

BARGAIN

ROVER 75 CONNOISSEUR

12 months MoT,

58,000 miles,

immaculate condition.

£700 o.n.o.

07946 302693.

MUST BE SEEN

VW POLO 1400

Full MoT, silver, good runner / condition inside and out,

radio/CD, alloys.

£675 ono.

01902 862610.

classic cars

CLASSIC CAR

FORD ESCORT

1997, classic insurance, full MoT, very clean and tidy,

76,000 miles from new,

£325 o.n.o.

07936 282473.

WANTED, CLASSIC Cars. Private cash buyer.Instant cash settlement. Any age. Any condition. 01630 652993 or 07773 462797.

commercial vehicles

CITROEN BERLINGO 1.9 diesel, MoT Sept, new brakes, new timing blet, any trial, £550 ono. 07952 331031.

FORD TRANSIT T reg, very clean and tidy, 12 months MoT, CD player, £695 ono. 07584 191793.

PEUGEOT PARTNER diesel Van, 2003, 10 months MoT, well maintained company owned. £650. 07397 956377.

motorbikes

HONDA C90 CUB Wanted anything considered, must be good condition, private buyer. Telephone 07966 701025.

scrap vehicles

OUR ADVERTISERS are reminded that it is an offence under the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013 to buy scrap cars/metal for cash.

A BETTER PRICE

for scrap or damaged cars and commercials. Spares for sale.

NINE LOCKS VEHICLE DISMANTLERS LTD

Brierley Hill 01384 76566 or 70553. Evenings 75397. DY5 3JZ.

vehicles wanted

CROWN MOTORS guarantee best price for your unwanted cars/vans. 07903 549849, buyer will call.

alan reed cars

Used cars wanted for cash Top prices paid. HP settled. Buyer could call.

01562 711083 / 07831 245313

spares & accessories

clutches / brakes / gearboxes

A CLUTCH CHANGE MOBILE

For Example: Citroen C1, C2, C3 Hyundai 110, Toyota Yaris Clios & Micras Ring for quotes on others!

30 yrs experience

ALL AREAS COVERED

Call Bob 01384 251328 07972 169554 anytime

9 Local Information

public & legal notices

LEGAL / PUBLIC NOTICES

For convenience you may fax any advertising requirements to

Marie Hogg on 01902 713146 or email marie.hogg@expressandstar.co.uk

(remember to include a name/contact number for confirmation of receipt)

BRIAN STANIER

(Deceased)

Pursuant to the Trustee Act 1925 any persons having a claim against or an interest in the Estate of the above named, late of 6 CLENT VIEW ROAD, STOURBRIDGE DY8 3JE, who died on 26/05/2016, are required to send written particulars thereof to the undersigned on or before 28/03/2017, after which date the Estate will be distributed having regard only to the claims and interests of which they have had notice.

Susan Nicholls,
The London Gazette (2953),
PO Box 3584,
Norwich NR7 7WD.

SUSAN ELIZABETH LUCAS

(Deceased)

Pursuant to the Trustee Act 1925 any persons having a claim against or an interest in the Estate of the aforementioned deceased, late of 12 Prospect Gardens Stourbridge West Midlands DY8 1LL, who died on 11/08/2016, are required to send particulars thereof in writing to the undersigned Solicitors on or before 31/03/2017, after which date the Estate will be distributed having regard only to claims and interests of which they have had notice.

WALL JAMES CHAPPELL
15-23 Hagley Road Stourbridge
West Midlands DY8 1QW T491852

10 Personals

personal

ATTRACTIVE lonely Female seeking broadminded males within a 20 mile radius. 01902 489 181.

GENTLEMAN

5ft 5in, 74, wishes to meet lady 50-75 for friendship possible relationship. Sandwell and surrounding areas. Photo appreciated and returned.

Box Number P20683 , Express and Star, Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES.

MEET SEXY local women, genuine adult contacts fast and discreet. Call 0330 022 6244/07008 026348

general

HAVE YOU CHECKED your advertisement today? We would respectfully remind advertisers that it is their responsibility to inform the publishers of any mistakes or inaccuracies on the first day of publication.

★ STAR PERFORMANCE ★

91%* of customers surveyed recently would recommend our services for buying and selling in their local area.

Sell your items In Print and Online: bookanad.expressandstar.co.uk

Sell your items Online only: classifiedads.expressandstar.co.uk

BUY LOCAL - SELL LOCAL with Express & Star Classifieds

(*135 customers surveyed May 2016)

Express & Star DATING

YOUR regional dating service, run by the dating experts who have been established since 1990. ***REAL people in YOUR region***

Try it.. You'll love it!

Dates in ***YOUR*** region

Here's how to use your dating service ...

To ***Place*** your advert call: **0844 381 5936** follow the simple instructions. You will also get ***£10 SMS CHAT CREDIT***

To ***Place*** your ad by text: Simply text: **REG** followed by your first name, date of birth, area and your advert (max 155 characters) and send to: **80098**. FREE Standard Network rates apply.

To ***Reply*** to members call: **0906 500 3955** calls cost £1.55 per min plus your phone company's access charge.

Have the adverts 6-digit box no written down and do ***key-it-in promptly*** when asked. Don't forget to leave contact details for replies.

To ***Reply*** by text: ***Text...*** **REPLY26** (leave space) box number (leave space) and then enter your message & send to **80098** eg: **REPLY26** 123456 hi **get in touch...** then send to **80098** Successfully received messages cost £1.50 per SMS received (Max 160 characters). You must exchange 7 messages each before you can swap contact details. Messages may be moderated for your safety and security.

Been left a message? ***Pickup*** your replies on: **0906 500 3957** calls cost £1.55 per min plus your phone company's access charge.

YOU can now ***Date ONLINE*** or via your mobile just visit: **http://dating.expressandstar.com**

THE biggest UK on-line database of 17 million UK REAL users waiting to meet ***you.. visit..*** **http://dating.expressandstar.com**

Single Women

REMEMBER: Calls cost £1.55 per minute plus your phone company's access charge. Texts cost £1.50 per message received.

FEMALE, 66 yrs old, looks young, loves to laugh, n/s, who is genuine, caring and just wants to be loved again. **Text only. Mailbox: 5750819**

KATIE 35yrs, slender well educated brunette seeks no strings mutual pleasure with gent 40+ Must be discreet, married or single. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 3003 Box 419673**

MARIE, very attractive curvy widow, longing for romance, seeking country-loving male with old-fashioned values for lots of TLC. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425599**

JANE, young 41, very broadminded seeks chap any age for discreet no strings fun, any age, no time wasters ACA. **Tel: No: 0906 515 3011 Box: 409715**

SUE 38yrs enjoys most things, meals in/out, easygoing, broadminded, passionate, slightly feisty, looking for adult fun, call me if your interested in spicing things up. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425587**

SOPHIA young 40yrs, married but bored, seeks discreet adult fun, any area, all calls answered. **Tel: 0906 515 3019 Box: 413399**

ROZ, 43, tactile, sensual, loves to dress up, and wear heels, seeks genuine caring male. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425597**

EMILY, mature well educated lady, blonde and smart and broadminded seeks gent any age for no strings fun. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 3023 Box 421375**

KATHY 37, gorgeous mixed race single female, 5ft 8ins, slim, sensual, just looking for kind, trustworthy guy any age, looks or race. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425589**

HI Gents, I'm Kelly, a down to earth lady, 35yrs, shapely brunette, seeking someone with GSOH, looks unimportant, any age. ACA, I promise! **Tel: 0906 515 3027 Box 423035**

JACKIE, 56yrs, attractive lady who is lots of fun seeks like-minded gent for nights in, days out and much much more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424491**

NAUGHTY curvy 46yr old lady, outgoing and bubbly with a naughty side and lots of banter, WLTM chap 30+. If you are married even better. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 3015 Box 424543**

SUE, 60s lady, calling all gents who seek a mature solvent stylish lady, I can wine and dine you, you will have a nice time, call or text me. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424781**

SARAH, 39yrs, married, seeking chap for no strings intimate times. Special friendship, mutual respect. Give me a call. **Tel: 0906 515 3031 Box 408291**

JAN 41, fed up of sitting at home every weekend watching TV alone. Feel the same and looking for love? please contact me. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425497**

TAMIKA, mature black beauty, hourglass figure and open minded. Pls call if you are discreet, broad minded and nice. I can travel and accommodate. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 3007 Box 422365**

AMANDA, slim blonde, 50s seeks discreet gent for special times, mutually beneficial to us both. Call now. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425327**

STACY 28yr old gorgeous brunette with buxom figure, intelligent and sensual, WLTM genuine male to get to know for fun dates and more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425457**

MELINDA, 52yrs, attractive and broad minded seeking chap any age for some fun. **Text only Mailbox: 4131946**

SARAH, 41, dizzy blonde, blue eyes, loves to dance seeks affectionate, hunky, fun male to make her laugh and brighten up her day. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425413**

JOSIE, sexy black lady, 52yrs seeks adult times with concerning gent, any age, discreet clean, womanly figure. **Text only Mailbox: 4028592**

YOUNG looking Indian female, 40, enjoys meals in/out, good company and conversation, looking for like-minded male. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425493**

ANNABELLE, sophisticated 28yrs hoping to meet older gent for adult fun, discreet, sincere, genuine advertiser, **Text only Mailbox: 4157105**

VIKKI 32yr old active female, confident, fit, loves night outs, looking for similar assertive male. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425453**

WANTED gent 50-76 for cosy nights in, good times, call or text me, you won't be sorry. I'm attractive and have lots to offer. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425339**

CAROL petite brunette, 38yrs, romantic, affectionate, outgoing, seeks similar sensual male for nice times together. Any age/looks. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425395**

LADY, looking for a mature, caring, loving gentleman, 55-70, to enjoy the finer things of life with and to be my best friend. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425309**

JEAN, mature lady, genuine with many hobbies, slim, blonde and attractive. WLTM interesting gent with GSOH, must be cheerful, looks unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424675**

KATHERINE, 28, tall, slim, dark, blue eyed female with many interests, OHAC, WLTM interesting male for dates, and more. Single dad welcome. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425287**

TRACY, 41, outgoing sun worshiper, OHAC, employed, looking for her Prince Charming to enjoy romantic holidays and good times together. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425257**

SHARON 36yr old single mum looking for loving guy who will appreciate me and help repair my broken heart. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425283**

SHELLEY slim N/S 40's female who likes the simple things in life so no big gestures required, seeking loyal loving male for hopeful LTR. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425253**

SANDRA, smart, sophisticated lady young looking 60s, genuine and kind seeks gent with GSOH, looks unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424671**

HELEN, mid 50's naughty lady seeks some fun times with gent any age. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424493**

MARY, professional mature lady, loves life, very sociable and fun, seeks gent for good conversation and happy times. All calls and texts answered. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424775**

EILEEN mid 60s seeks gent 50s-60s for friendship, possibly much more. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425341**

LINDA, 48yrs attractive brunette seeks gent for laughter, wining dining. Age uninportant. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425337**

LOVING lady, romantic and tactile seeks like-minded gent for special times, lets make each other feel special. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425325**

ATTRACTIVE Caribbean lady 59yrs, very jolly and fun seeking gent any age who must love good times. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425323**

ANDREA, 43, slim with long dark hair, blue eyes, loves to dance seeks romantic man to share intimate moments in or out. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425221**

CAROL, mid 50s lady, young at heart, attractive and sexy (so I'm told)! Give me a call if you are a gent with GSOH. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424783**

THELMA, 59, slim, petite and Afro Caribbean, GSOH, trustworthy, honest and very caring, leave me your details if that sounds good to you! **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425195**

THAI female 39, very beautiful, petite and self sufficient, loves cooking and home making, looking for caring, kind man/single dad. Please call me. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425191**

CHRISTINE, 40, attractive slim sporty brunette seeks fit well built male. Call me let's see what the future brings. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425061**

AMANDA, 36, tall, slim, busty brunette seeks man, any age, any area, for discreet daytime fun. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418117**

LOUISE, 29, curvy red haired female, been hurt in the past seeks male to buy her flowers and mend her broken heart. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425041**

LYN, 47, curvy quiet sensitive brunette but with a wild side. It could be exciting to know me! **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425013**

ANGELA, 48yrs, seeks male companion for nights out, dining, maybe more. ACA or text me. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424495**

Single Men

SEMI retired business man, early 60s, slim, well travelled, fit, tanned, good looking, solvent and very discreet, WLTM female, 35-55, for daytime fun. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425183**

IAN, 5ft8, medium build, OHAC, late 50s, likes most things, holidays, gardening, motorbikes, WLTM similar aged lady, 50-60, with nice personality. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 421345**

GARY, 46, 5ft10, blue eyes, GSOH, likes football, quiet nights in, nights out, cinema, walking, travelling, looking for a likewise woman, 35-50, bubbly and fun loving with a GSOH. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425441**

I'M Andy, 52, looking for a lady, 50-65, for long term relationship, so text me and lets see what happens. **Text only. Mailbox: 5396692**

MATURE male, 50, medium-build, varied interests, seeks true Christian female, 35-45, who enjoys evenings in and dining out, for friendship or possibly more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 419283**

ATTRACTIVE male, 58, seeks adventurous female, 50-70, for close fun. Any status or size. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425535**

DAN 46, easy going chap WLTM a lady 40+ for an uncomplicated discreet friendship with on strings fun. Discretion guaranteed. **Text only. Mailbox: 5595608**

WELL made broad male, 5ft 10ins, medium build, looking for some adult fun with lovely sexy lady, possible LTR or friends with benefits. **Text only. Mailbox: 5321154**

MATURE male, 50, medium-build, varied interests, seeks true Christian female, 35-45, who enjoys evenings in and dining out, for friendship or possibly more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 419283**

CHRISTIAN male 51, seeking Christian female, 35-45 for friendship, possibly more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 423747**

MATURE male, 70s, tall, retired, recovering alcoholic, WLTM someone understanding, maybe in the same situation for friendship and mutual support. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425263**

YOUNG looking 63 year old male, GSOH, friendly, considerate, attractive, looking for a naughty female, any age/status, for adult fun and friendship. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425243**

IRISH gent, 66, GSOH, n/s, wishes to meet lady, North Birmingham area, for friendship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425269**

JAMES, 59, 5ft11, average build, WLTM a Christian lady, 60-70, for companionship. Hope to hear from you. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425227**

IRISH male, 62, 5ft 9ins, GSOH, independent, seeks genuine female for friendship initially. Birmingham area. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 403623**

MALE 63, widower, Irish, GSOH, tall, independent, seeks special lady. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409243**

MALE 65, GSOH, seeks female for friendship and companionship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418389**

TOM, 32, slim, attractive, own home, likes to eat out and in, WLTM honest, kind girl for tender, loving care and fun times. No timewasters please. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424929**

JAY, attractive, 6ft2, single father, loves a laugh and a giggle, looking for a lady for evenings out, company and maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424303**

CHRIS, 49yrs honest gent seeks lady 45-55 for socialising, friendship, maybe leading to romance. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425345**

PETER, sincere solvent gent 70s seeks lady to wine dine, foreign travel, all expenses paid. I would love a traveling companion. Genuine advertiser. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425343**

MALCOLM, 60 something gent, own hair and teeth, GSOH, genuine and Kind WLTM sincere lady to wine and dine. Please call. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425335**

PROFESSIONAL gent, 44yrs, tall, attractive and genuine. Seeks genuine feminine lady for genuine romance. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425333**

PIERS, 56yrs, romantic gent WLTM lady to wine, dine, spoil. I'm kind, caring, generous pls call me. Single mums welcome. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425331**

GENUINE gentleman, family minded, kind, generous seeks lady 55-75 for wining, dining and wine and laughter. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425329**

WIDOWER, 60s, honest, trustworthy, GSOH, likes country walks, shows, nights in, restaurants etc, WLTM a partner to share interests. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425157**

LONELY male seeks partner for company and maybe LTR. GSOH and very caring. Copd sufferer but still likes to enjoy life. **Text only. Mailbox: 4310699**

DAVE, 54, 5ft10, medium build, easy going, happy, looking for an attractive, loving and caring female, 45-65, for friendship and relationship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 423073**

YOUNG 70 widower, fit, lonely, 5ft 11ins, 11st, likes drives, walks, DIY, meals out, gardening, smoker, looking for lady to spend life with. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424687**

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Mickael Partodikromo during training sessions at Wolverhampton University's Walsall Campus, Gorway Road, for Rushall Olympic, whom he joined in the summer

Partodikromo's immediate goal is to help Rushall win promotion

Mickael Pics his side in bid for football dream

HOW far would you go to chase a dream? In Mickael Partodikromo's case, the answer is about 11,000 miles.

Partodikromo comes from New Caledonia, a little-known collection of islands owned by France and located in the southwest Pacific Ocean, between Australia and New Zealand.

For the past six years he has been trying to make it as a professional footballer, first in New Zealand, then France and now in England, his journey taking in stops at Swansea, Chelsea, Bolton, Sheffield United and, now Rushall Olympic.

Clearly, Partodikromo is not your average non-league footballer, or indeed your average 21-year-old. Well-spoken and polite, he has the kind of maturity and quiet assurance which can probably only be achieved by spending four years away from your family, growing up on the other side of the world.

Partodikromo has not seen his parents for two years and says he won't return home until he has fulfilled his ambitions.

Spotted

"My parents support me a lot but I tell them not to call me too often," he says. "I know if they do, it will only make me homesick. To make the dream happen, you have to make sacrifices."

Football, Partodikromo says, had been a central part of his life long before he was spotted by a scout and invited to join the Asia-Pacific Football Academy in Wellington, New Zealand.

He left home, alone, aged just 14 and only versed at that point in French and Kunie, a language native to New Caledonia.

"For the first three weeks in New Zealand I couldn't understand a word anyone was saying," laughs Partodikromo, who now speaks English so fluently you would never guess it was ever a problem.

Two years at the academy was followed by the offer of a trial at Swansea. "I went there by myself, I was 16 and stayed in digs," he says.

SPORTING FEATURE

By Matt Maher

"At home in winter it is 21 or 22 degrees. Over here it is zero degrees! Before I came to England, I had never seen snow!"

"It was hard," he admits. "Adapting to the weather and things like that. At home in winter it is 21 or 22 degrees. Over here it is zero degrees! Before I came to England, I had never seen snow! It was something I just had to get used to."

The trial at Swansea was followed by another at Chelsea and then Bolton before, in 2013, Partodikromo was offered a scholarship at Sheffield United.

Though it did not end in the offer of a professional deal, the confidence gained from two years at Bramall Lane convinced Partodikromo to remain in Europe to continue chasing his dream.

After a brief spell at Worcester City in pre-season, where he played in a friendly against Villa, he joined Rushall in September.

"It's a friendly club and everyone has been very nice to me," he says. "I enjoy the football. It is physical and different to what I am used to but I hope it will make me fitter and stronger."

Partodikromo lives alone, having recently moved to Walsall from Sheffield. "I do my own everything, I take care of myself," he says. "I have gotten used to it, moving from home from such an early age. It's fine."

He adds: "When I tell them where I am from, people have no idea where it is. I have to show them on the phone. They can't believe it."

The obvious question, however, is exactly how he is managing to get by on football earnings alone?

"I saved up some money from when I was living in France and I get a bit of money from Rushall," he says. "Then, sometimes, if I really need something, mum and dad will help me, though I don't ask very often."

There is an added warmth in his voice when he speaks about his dad Bernard's work as a pharmacist, or the cooking lessons from mum Sabine which have helped him fend for himself half a world away.

Footsteps

It is the desire to repay their faith, their willingness for him to take the chance which gets him through the disappointments, the setbacks and the cold nights.

Partodikromo wants to follow in the footsteps of France World Cup-winner Christian Karembeu, by some distance New Caledonia's most famous export, and be an inspiration to others on the islands.

"I want to give back to my parents all they have done for me," he said. "We have a big family back home and my country is not famous.

"I want to repay them and be an inspiration for the children, an example for them to follow. A lot of them get in trouble in early age but I want to be able to show them what is possible, to push them the other way."

Partodikromo's immediate goal for the Pics this season is to earn a regular starting place and help the club win promotion from Evo-Stik Northern Premier Division.

The larger dream, meanwhile, remains alive. There is, he insists, no deadline, no point at which he might have to reconsider his goals. "No, no, no, I can't think like that," he says with a smile. "It's going to happen. I am positive about that."

The New Caledonian island paradise, 11,000 miles away, that Partodikromo left behind to pursue his footballing dream - before pitching up at Rushall as part of his journey

Sport

New Caledonian? This'll do for Pics star Mickael

Page 47

Run extends as star two on the move

Stourbridge 2 Marine 0

STOURBRIDGE overcame the loss of star defender Dan Scarr to move into the Evo-Stik League Premier Division play-off places on Saturday.

The 22-year-old said his goodbyes to his Glassboys team-mates ahead of sealing a move to Championship Birmingham. Scarr has signed a two-and-a-half-year deal for an undisclosed fee.

Boss Gary Hackett said: "We are all thrilled for Dan. He's a great lad and he deserves this chance. He's been so consistent in his performances. I can't speak highly enough of him."

Fellow defender Kristian Green is also on the move, moving two steps up the non-league pyramid after agreeing a transfer to Solihull Moors.

Chairman Andy Pountney said: "We're sorry to lose Kristian. He's been a really consistent performer for us in his 18 months at the club."

On Saturday, Jordan Archer's pair of close-range headers from crosses by Stuart Pierpoint and Luke Benbow late in the first half decided an uneventful contest in which Marine were happy to sit back and stifle.

The win stretched to 12 league matches Stour's unbeaten league record, moving Hackett's men into the top five for the first time this season.

"Bearing in mind we have lost two very strong defenders, we showed strength and power," said Hackett. "Stuart Pierpoint played very well last season but has had to be patient. He has done a great job since coming back in and while I know Chris Knight can play anywhere, I also know he can be a great left-back. At the same time, we have some very good flair players as well.

"We won't bring in people for the sake of it. It might not happen straight away but it could, we have irons in the fire."

Strike duo Luke Benbow and Jordan Archer each bagged a brace as Stourbridge overpowered Mickleover Sports 4-0 last Tuesday.

Wrestling champ can inspire pupils

A DUDLEY school principal says a wrestling champion can inspire his pupils to future success.

Tyler Bate, aged 19, a former pupil at Ormiston Forge Academy in Old Hill, beat Pete Dunne at Blackpool's Empress Ballroom to become the UK's first WWE champion. He was presented with his championship belt by US wrestling legend Triple H

Dunne, 23, has been competing for 11 years and had been the pundits' favourite to win. Bate, meanwhile, has been wrestling for just five years and works as a forklift driver alongside his training.

The Netherton resident represents Wolverhampton wrestling promotion Fight Club Pro.

Academy prinicpal Andrew Burns said: "We are all incredibly proud of Tyler's achievement. He's shown that age and where you come from isn't a barrier to success. He'll inspire Forge students and he'll inspire young people all over the world, wherever he goes.

"He's worked hard and is a leading light for bright young talent from this area."

Student nets place in national squad

Kaitlin Willets

A DUDLEY College student has been selected for the AoC National Netball squad after impressing during a two-day trial.

After competing against 80 other students from across the country for 20 places, Kaitlin Willetts, aged 17, secured her spot, becoming the only student from the West Midlands to be selected.

Her success means that she will be heading to Gateshead, Belfast, Glasgow, Nottingham and Cardiff to train and play matches.

Netball

Willetts is currently studying a BTEC Level 3 in sports coaching but still manages to play for Gornal-based Libra Lea Netball Club in the Regional and Walsall Leagues and also represents the West Midlands Regional Under-17 team.

Willetts' coach at Libra Lea, Sally Bromley, was full of praise for the teenager, saying: "She is doing unbelievably well to balance netball, college and work. It is really tough for the girls, so it is amazing she is managing to do it as well as she is."

Bromley also discussed how important it is for Willets to choose her university based on not only her education, but also their netball teams.

She said: "University is an important step for Kaitlin.

"It has the possibility of giving her a much larger platform to potentially be picked up from. She has a lot of potential, so hopefully she can realise it."

HOME RECORD STAYS INTACT

Stourbridge 21 Leicester Lions 18

STOUR extended their unbeaten home record with a gritty performance that recorded a first win in six attempts over their East Midlands rivals.

Stourbridge remain third in National 2 North and hope to close the gap on both leaders Caldy and second place Sale, both of whom must travel to Stourton Park.

Captain Ciaran Moore got Stourbridge on the scoresheet, before Jon Boden missed a penalty for the visitors. Respite was short-lived as Olly Taylor scored and Boden converted to put Lions ahead, then converted a penalty.

Dan Rundle outpaced the opposition to score near the corner, Luke White converted.

Boden shanked a kick at goal before White landed a three-pointer for Stour.

It was cat-and-mouse in the second half, White saw a 41m penalty attempt rebound from an upright, but Boden struck back when Scott became the fall guy for the penalty count and was yellow carded. White restored the margin shortly after and slotted a further penalty.

Advantage

Lions launched a final all-out assault and claimed a try through Kane Nixon. Stourbridge established a five point advantage over Lions. This week they trek north to a Harrogate side scrapping it out in the relegation battle followed by a must-win game over Sale on February 4.

● Stourbridge Lions won 30-10 at at Old Yardleians to stay top of the league.

Lions started like they had a train to catch, play was fractured and passes went astray, but Ben Trinham's penalty settled them. A Trinham drop goal followed, then the same player converted Joe Loverock's try.

Will Fallows added two tries, the first converted by Trinham. Lions then went off the boil and 25-3 became 25-10, but Jim Owen went over against a side reduced by two sin-binned players.

In a very good weekend, the Greyhounds won local bragging rights by completing a Midlands Reserve League double over DK 3rds 38-8, the Grasshoppers won 34-5 away at Redditch 2nds and the Colts finished it off with a 43-28 Colts league victory at Shrewsbury.

Winger Dan Rundle outstrips the Leicester defence and scores Stour's second try

Anxious wait in battle against relegation

STOURBRIDGE Chess Club's Birmingham division 3 team played at Solihull on Wednesday and drew 3-3. Sam Bradley, Tony Shaw and Martin Berridge all played well to win against higher graded opponents.

Unfortunately, Stourbridge really needed two points to pull clear from the relegation zone. They now have to sit and wait until March 9 for the next match in this division.

On Thursday Stourbridge played at Walsall Kipping in Wolverhampton division 1. At full strength Stourbridge would have had little chance, but without their top two boards hopes of getting anything from the match were next to zero, especially when Walsall Kipping fielded their strongest possible team. The final result was 5½-½ to Walsall Kipping with Eric Horwill drawing. Technically, his opponent lost on time due to a misunderstanding of the time controls but Horwill was gentlemen enough to offer him a draw.

The match result does, however, leave Stourbridge in real danger of relegation.

Winner not troubled but silver claimed

IT may have been another weekend and another muddy field to run round for athletes from Dudley Kingswinford Running Club but rather than continuing the relegation battle in the league the blue hoops had the opportunity to race in the Midlands Masters Cross Country Championships.

With the league races on the back burner until next month this was effectively a cup game and like many cup games DK fielded a weakened side.

With the race only open to runners over 35 years of age it was a case of experience over youth with DK fielding a single team of three runners in the M45 category.

With the race taking place at Aldersley Stadium in Wolverhampton the trio didn't have too far to travel but this was the third weekend in succession that the venue had hosted a cross country race and the ground over the 8k course was decidedly poached, rutted and muddy but with some imaginative course planning the organisers were able to miss out the worst parts over the four-lap course.

Although the DK runners were never in a position to trouble the winner, the recent Shropshire County champion and England international, Paul Ward of Telford AC who romped home unopposed in 27.48 the blue hoops performed well with Darran Bishop coming home in 25th place in 33.21, Dave Norman finished in 34.20 to take 29th place and Mark Homer brought the team home in 32nd position in 35.37 pocketing an individual bronze medal in the M55 age group.

DK claimed a team silver medal sandwiched between the local heavyweights Tipton Harriers who took the gold medal and Wolverhampton & Bilston who bagged the bronze.

Improving side get the better of Yeltz

Ashton Utd 2 Halesowen 1

DESPITE a battling performance, Halesowen lost to an improving Ashton United side, who have now won three home games in a row in the Evo-Stik Premier.

All the goals came in the opening half, with Ashton taking the lead on 12 minutes when Matt Chadwick crossed and Ryan Crowther found himself with an easy chance to make it 1-0.

But Danny Bragoli got the Yeltz back on terms on 17 minutes.

Just before the half-hour-mark, Ashton went ahead again through Dominic Smalley who neatly finished after setting himself up for a shot.

★★★

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